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# ON RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY.

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE CHRISTIAN'S MAGAZINE.

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As one of the avowed designs of this work is to assert the truth and refute error, it has to combat in the outset a fashionable and imposing prejudice. It seems to be taken for granted, that how perfect soever the right of judging and professing for ourselves, there exists no right of inquiry into the judgment or profession of others. In religion, at least, this maxim is held to be incontrovertible by many who never think of applying it to any other subject. To disquisitions on topics in which all denominations agree, they can listen with pleasure; they can even permit the peculiarities of each to be detailed in succession; but from everything which wears the form of *controversy* they turn away with spontaneous contempt. Their aversion is so fixed that hardly any plea of excellence will be allowed in behalf of a work which stands convicted on the charge of being



controversial. The fact is sufficient to preclude every other trial, and to infer condemnation as a matter of course.

That these summary and oftentimes injurious decisions have been unprovoked on the part of disputants, I shall not affirm. On the contrary, I will fairly concede that the unfairness, the heat, and the rudeness, which too frequently occur in polemical writings, are most offensive to the discreet reader, and make him shy of authors from whom he may expect such entertainment.

But while there can be no apology for conduct which offers equal violence to the rules of good breeding and the precepts of Christianity, there is ground to suspect that more is attributed to its influence in producing the prevalent dislike to controversy than it can justly claim. For as our age must not arrogate to itself the praise of all the meekness and candor which have been in the world, so it is certain that men great and good, pacific and modest, have studied the most controverted themes in an age when harshness and incivility were more common than they are now. In accounting, then, for that prejudice which we are considering, much must be deducted from the current professions of courtesy and candor, and transferred to that *indifference*

which will not be at the pains to examine on which side lies the right of a question concerning eternal hope ! For such a morbid state of feeling we can suggest no remedy, and can only pour out our most fervent prayer that the first admonition which it shall be compelled to regard may not be that awful voice, “ Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime hadst thy good things ! ” The prejudice itself, unlike those lessons with which truth and wisdom pre-occupy the heart, will appear, upon a close inspection, to be as destitute of solidity as it is assuming in manner ; for, in the

1st place, It admits not of dispute that the holy scriptures point out an opposite course. Their injunction is, to *buy the truth and sell it not. To cease from the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge—earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints—to try the spirits whether they are of God.* All these directions imply, not that men are to spend their lives in laying the foundations of their faith, but that they are to employ their opportunities and faculties in selecting the true from the false ; that they are to prize it when selected ; to enrich it with fresh acquisitions ; and to defend it with their utmost skill. How this can be done without controversy, so long as there are “ deceivers in the world,” it

is incumbent on them to show who would suffer the truths of the gospel to be sacrificed, one after another, by men of "corrupt minds," rather than raise a finger or press an argument for their protection. It is indeed not more lamentable than true, that a host of candidates beset the inquirer. Every sect cries out, *we are the people, and the law of the Lord is with us*; every partisan enforces the pretensions of his sect. But this, though frequently urged, is the weakest of all reasons for keeping aloof from investigation. The amount is, "the danger of going astray is great, the consequences fatal; therefore I would shut my eyes. Good sense would say, "the danger of error is great, the consequences fatal: therefore I will use all my diligence that I may not be misled;" for certainly, if "straight be the gate and narrow the way which leadeth unto life," we have the strongest inducement possible to search out and embrace the "few who find it." We are, therefore, reduced to this alternative, either that there is no truth at all, or that we are bound to seek it through every peril, to distinguish its voice amid all clamors, and to possess it at any price. If this condition seem hard, let it be remembered,

2. That it is not left to our discretion whether we shall choose or not.

The determination to choose *nothing* is a determination *not to choose the truth*, and this draws after it the condemnation of those who *love darkness rather than light*. The most high God having given us his word as the rule of our faith and duty, a neglect to seek its counsel because men wrangle about its meaning, is to make the hazard of going wrong a reason for never being anxious to go right. It would be like the excuse of a servant, who, having in common with others received his master's orders to repair to a certain place, should resolve not to stir because his fellow-servants quarreled about the road. Their disobedience could never justify his. Nor is there a man upon earth who would not pronounce it to be the plea of a fool, that out of his pure love of peace he had never been at the trouble to ascertain the import of his master's instructions! The fact is, that no medium can be assigned between receiving and rejecting the truth. If rejected, we seal our own perdition—if received, we must reject whatever is hostile to it; that is, we must institute a comparison between conflicting claims, which is precisely the object of controversy.

Pursuing the argument a little farther, we shall perceive, in the

3d place, That in disclaiming all contro-

versy, we set out with a principle which it is impossible to carry through.

In what department of society, or on what subject of discourse, do the thoughts of men accord? The law has long been celebrated for its fertility in litigation. Medicine is hardly inferior to the bar; agriculture keeps up a sharp debate with commerce; and the politician has always to navigate a "tempestuous sea." Not a project, a character, nor an incident, can be introduced into common conversation without calling forth different strictures, according to the views, habits, relations, and tempers of the company. And it is by no means unusual for some, who abhor controversy in *religion*, to be both talkative and disputatious, if not dogmatic and bitter, on other matters. The world is a vast scene of strife. A man must either take it as he finds it, and bear his part in the general collision, or else go out of it altogether. It is the inevitable consequence of imperfect knowledge and depraved appetite, of that confusion of intellect and corruption of heart which flow from sin. When, therefore, we are under the necessity of either being exiled from society, or of giving and receiving contradiction; and when we submit to this necessity without murmuring in all cases but those which concern religion,

what is it but to declare that principles affecting our duty toward God, the highest happiness of our nature, and our responsibility for a future state, are the only things not worth contending for ?

The pretense, that religion is a concern too solemn and sacred for the passions of controversy, is like the pretense with which some justify their “restraining prayer before God ;” that he is too high and holy to be approached by such beings as they are. And thus, to display their reverence, they become profane, and live like atheists from pure devotion ! Both are cases of error without excuse ; we may neither be light in prayer nor wrathful in debate.

If it be alleged that religion loses more than she gains by controversy, this, with an allowance for the mismanagement of unskillful advocates, is a direct censure of her champions, and a surrender of her cause. Are they who espouse such an opinion prepared for its consequences ? Are they willing to say, that when the world was lying in ignorance, in wickedness, and in woe, the introduction of light from above produced more evil than good ? That the gospel is a plague and not a blessing, because, through the malignity of its foes, it has often brought a sword instead of

peace? That it had been better for men never to have "known the way of righteousness," than risk opposition in following it? That the reformation of religion was a senseless scheme; that the martyrs died like fools; and that all the heroes who have been "valiant for the truth"—all the "ministers of grace" who have explained and established it—all the "apostles, and prophets, and wise men," whom the wisdom of God commissioned to reveal it—and that *wisdom* itself in the person of Jesus Christ—were disturbers of human tranquillity, and spent their time in no better labor than that of "turning the world upside down?" If you start at these things, what do you mean by asserting that "religion suffers from controversy?" For all, prophets, apostles, wise men, and the Redeemer himself, fought her battles, and yielded their latest breath in her defence!

You cannot stop even here. Religion, you say, suffers from controversy. Then it cannot endure investigation. It shrinks from the touch of reason, for controversy is reasoning; and, of course, it cannot be true, for truth never yet declined the test, nor sustained the slightest harm from the most fiery ordeal. On the assumption, therefore, that religion has truth on her side, you can hardly do her a greater injury than to forbid her entering into

the lists with her antagonists. They will represent, and argue, and declaim. They will solicit, and soothe, and flatter, and sneer, till they pervert the judgment of many, and seduce the affections of more; and religion, betrayed and insulted, her banner thrown down, her weapons shivered, her lips sealed, her limbs bound "in affliction and iron," is to be laid at their feet and left to their mercy, in testimony of the respect and attachment of her friends! It was not in this way that they formerly treated her, nor is it to this treatment that we owe our privileges. Her enemies, potent, subtle, and persevering, were encountered by her sons, and defeated as often as they ventured into the field. Those masterly defences of revelation, those profound researches into its sense, that flood of light which has been poured upon its peculiar doctrines and its benign institutions, are the recompense of the war which Christian zeal and talent have waged in its cause. Had apathy like ours enthralled the spirit of our fathers, we should hardly have been able, at this day, to distinguish in religion between our right hand and our left.

The prejudice, therefore, against religious controversy, is irrational and hurtful. It is a prejudice against the progress and victories of truth. The misconduct of opponents to each



other, is a personal concern. It disgraces themselves, but belongs not to the nature or merits of any controversy. This, in itself considered, is but the comparison of jarring opinions ; with a reference, in matters of religion, to the scriptural standard. There is no more necessity for falling into a rage when demonstrating a proposition in Christianity, than when demonstrating a proposition in mathematics ; although the infinitely interesting quality of the one above the other, will involve a deeper feeling ; will furnish an explanation of the warmth which is apt to accompany it ; and will draw from candor an allowance for our common frailty.

Controversy then being unavoidable, as truth and falsehood often meet, and never agree, it must occasionally occupy every one who wishes to *have a good conscience*. But as great evils result from an *improper manner of conducting* it, the remarks in this paper are to be understood as contemplating it under the following restrictions :

1. There should be no personal asperity. The greater part of feuds arises from the rash use of names and epithets. If one is obliged to expose weakness or disingenuousness, let not the exposure separate decorum from

strength ; nor forfeit respect in the act of forcing conviction.

2. There should be no impeachment of motives, where facts to justify such a censure are not too palpable to be set aside. The bosom is a sacred retreat : God alone can explore it without the aid of external evidence. And, therefore, a man must be his own betrayer, before his fellow-man may presume to judge of what passes in his heart. Bad as the condition of the world is, it would be unutterably worse, if men always meant whatever their words convey, or even their actions indicate. Many persons have said and done, with the utmost integrity of motive, things which could not have been said or done by some others without an absolute sacrifice of principle—though it is not hence to be inferred that the things were right.

3. No consequence of an opinion should be attributed to those by whom it is disowned.

As the number of correct reasoners is comparatively few, positions are often advanced of which their authors are far from perceiving the real tendency. This observation solves a difficulty that otherwise would be very embarrassing. Many a one whose piety it would be insolent to question, has held tenets which

lead to the most impious conclusions. What then? must we say that these conclusions form a part of his creed, and arraign him when he denies them, as being at once both a blasphemer and a hypocrite? For example: because we are persuaded that opposition to the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus, and to the doctrine of the reformed churches concerning the divine decrees, will drive the opposers, if closely followed up, through the Socinian and deistical camps, into atheism itself; are we, therefore, to brand them as Socinians, deists, or atheists? God forbid! It is our consolation to know that multitudes of them would, with horror, abjure their views on these points, could they see them to be connected with such results; and to believe that they renounce in words, things, which, without being aware of it, they love in their hearts. It is ignorance of this sort which, in some cases, reconciles with the existence of grace, a notion subversive of the gospel. Let me not, however, be supposed to favor in the slightest degree, that monster of modern philosophy—the innocence of error. Detect it; pursue it; hunt it down; urge it over the precipice: but permit those who started with it to disengage themselves in season, and save their lives. In plain words: charge home

upon error its most tremendous consequences ; but charge them not, when solemnly disavowed, upon the man whom it has misled. If you reason fairly, he must either quit his ground, or maintain it feebly ; and while your triumph will be complete, neither mercy nor justice will forbid you to let him shelter himself from crime amid the thickets of contradiction.

The reader will doubtless apply the foregoing rules, without abatement, to the disquisitions in the present work. And his right to do so is unquestionable. That he shall never, in perusing it, meet with an instance of transgression, it would savor of boasting to affirm. But that it shall not be often repeated, nor long continued, he may reasonably demand. Care shall certainly be employed that the *Christian's Magazine* be not unworthy of its name ; but if, unhappily, anything of a different mark should steal into its pages, let the Christian critic remember that he owes to its writers the same indulgence which they owe to him : and he will enter an occasional trespass into his account current with human imperfection.

# ESSAYS ON EPISCOPACY

## R E V I E W .

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*A Collection of Essays on the subject of Episcopacy, which originally appeared in the Albany Centinel, and which are principally ascribed to the Rev. Dr. Linn, the Rev. Mr. Beasley, and Thomas Y. How, Esq. With additional notes and remarks. 8vo. p. p. 210. New-York, T. & J. Swords, 1806.*

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EARLY in the summer of 1804, the Rev. John Henry Hobart, an assistant minister of Trinity Church, New-York, published a work, entitled, "*A Companion for the Altar: consisting of a short explanation of the Lord's Supper; and meditations and prayers, proper to be used before, and during the receiving of the Holy Communion, according to the form prescribed by the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the United States of America.*" This was followed, in the fall of the same year, by another compilation, from the pen of the same gentleman, entitled, "*A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.*"

These volumes, especially the former, appeared, at the time of their publication, not only to the non-episcopal reader, but, if we are correctly informed, to discreet Episcopalians themselves, to advance claims which it is extremely difficult to substantiate.

Of the nature of these claims, the following extract from the *Companion for the Altar*, will give a general idea.

“ The Judge of the whole earth indeed will do right. The grace of God quickens and animates all the degenerate children of Adam. The mercy of the Saviour is co-extensive with the ruin into which sin has plunged mankind. And ‘ in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.’ But where the Gospel is proclaimed, communion with the church by the participation of its ordinances, at the hands of the duly authorized priesthood, is the indispensable condition of salvation. Separation from the prescribed government and regular priesthood of the church, when it proceeds from *involuntary and unavoidable ignorance or error*, we have reason to trust, will not intercept from the humble, the penitent, and obedient, the blessings of God’s favour. But when we humbly submit to that priesthood which Christ and his apostles constituted ; when, in the lively exercise of penitence and faith, we partake of the ordinances administered by them, we maintain our communion with that church

which the Redeemer purifies by his blood, which he quickens by his Spirit, and whose faithful members he will finally crown with the most exalted glories of his heavenly kingdom. The important truth which the universal church has uniformly maintained, that, to experience the full and exalted efficacy of the sacraments, we must receive them from a valid authority, is not inconsistent with that charity which extends mercy to all who labour under *involuntary* error. But great is the guilt, and imminent the danger, of those who, possessing the means of arriving at the knowledge of the truth, *negligently* or *wilfully* continue in a state of separation from the authorized ministry of the church, and participate of ordinances administered by an irregular and invalid authority. Wilfully rending the peace and unity of the church, by separating from the ministrations of its authorized priesthood; obstinately contemning the means which God in his sovereign pleasure, hath prescribed for their salvation, they are guilty of rebellion against their Almighty Law-giver, and Judge; they expose themselves to the awful displeasure of that Almighty Jehovah, who will not permit his institutions to be condemned, or his authority violated, with impunity." This from the "Meditation" for "Saturday evening." p. 202—204.

As we have quoted the passage, rather in order to connect the circumstances which gave rise to



the "collection" immediately under review, than to subject it to rigid criticism; we forbear commenting on several assertions, in maintaining which the reverend writer, if a little pressed, might perhaps find that he has no ingenuity to spare. We now consider it in reference to the subject of the "Essays."

Extravagant as such pretensions must seem to those whose convictions are of a different sort, and offensive as they were to individuals whose predilections are certainly not anti-episcopal, no notice, so far as we know, was taken of Mr. Hobart's productions, nor any thing published on the other side, till the summer of 1805. Then a writer, generally supposed to be the Rev. Dr. LINN, introduced into "the Albany Centinel," under the head of "Miscellanies, No. ix." some free strictures on the Episcopal claims. He immediately met with an antagonist of no mean powers, under the signature of a *Layman of the Episcopal Church*, who is understood to be THOMAS Y. HOW, Esq. To the aid of the latter came the Rev. FREDERICK BEASLEY, Rector of St. Peter's Church, Albany, with the venerable name of *Cyprian. Clemens*, or Dr. L. himself, shortly appeared in favour of the Miscellanist; as the battle waxed sore, the band of the hierarchy was joined by two right reverend prelates, the one from this state, as *Cornelius*; the other from Pennsylvania, as an *Episcopalian*; together with Mr. (now Dr.)

HOBART himself, in the twofold form of *Detector and Vindex*; while the *Miscellanist* re-appeared in the characters of *Umpire* and an *Inquirer*. By the forces thus marshalled, five against one, the warfare was protracted till the public grew weary, and the printer interposed to effect an armistice. However, that the record and the fruits of so memorable a campaign might not be lost, the Rev Mr. HOBART did not think it a misapplication of his time, nor a disservice to his church, to gather the pieces of both parties, and republish them in a separate volume with a preface, annotations, and comments of his own. We, accordingly, take up the "collection" as it came from his hands.

We have heard a suggestion of unfairness in this transaction. We do not see how the charge can be supported, unless the writers on the Episcopal side have been permitted to alter and amend their essays without extending the same privilege to their opponents. The modification of a single paragraph may cover with ridicule the most forcible argument which was directed against it *before* the modification, and would insult the reader by imposing upon him something which was not the subject of remark. Of so degrading an artifice no reputable man ought to be lightly suspected. As we have no such suspicion, and as this alone could justify a charge of unfairness, we do not see that Mr H. is at all reprehensible for

republishing a set of essays which had been thrown upon the world without any pecuniary restriction, and accompanying them with such criticism as he deemed just.

Mr. H. observes in his preface, that “ the friends of the church and of Episcopacy, however reluctant to discuss an important religious topic in a public paper, were compelled to resort to the same mode, for defence, which the author of *Miscellanies* had chosen for his attack.” We lament, as sincerely as themselves, that a *Newspaper* was selected for such a discussion. We lamented it from the first. We never flattered ourselves that it would operate with a favourable influence either on the cause of truth, or on the social feeling of the community.

But when Mr. H. and the *Layman*, and *Cyprian*, all complain of being assaulted in the peaceful exercise of a common right, and thus endeavour to throw the odium of aggression upon the author of “*Miscellanies*,” it is rather over-acting. To exclude all non-episcopalians from “the church which the Redeemer purifies by his blood, and quickens by his Spirit,”—to pronounce all their ministrations “irregular and invalid,”—to charge them with “great guilt” and threaten them with “imminent danger,” for “negligently or wilfully continuing in a state of separation” from the episcopal church—to represent them as “wilfully rending the peace and unity of the church; as

obstinately contemning the means which God hath appointed for their salvation;" as "guilty of rebellion against their Almighty Law-giver, and Judge,"—to publish all this to the world; and then most gravely to tell these same non-episcopalians, that there is no attack upon them; but only a little wholesome admonition for the edification of devout episcopalians on the evening before the Holy Communion! and, moreover, to put on a lofty air, and break out into angry rebuke, toward those who are not satisfied with their explanation, is really an improvement in polemical finesse. But hold! let us look again at these pretty figures of rhetoric, by which thunderbolts, hurled at the heads of opponents, are converted into the gentle dews of instruction and consolation to friends—Schismatics, usurpers, renders of the church's unity, rebels against their Almighty Law-giver!—Verily, if this is no attack upon non-episcopalians, it is so like one, that we need a shrewd interpreter at our elbow, to prevent our mistaking it. "I never," said Jack, of Lord Peter's brown bread, "saw a piece of mutton in my life, so nearly resembling a slice from a twelve-penny loaf!!"

If Mr. H. had intended an attack upon the anti-episcopal denominations, in what manner *could* he have made it? Not by assailing them individually in the street: not by entering their houses and reading them a lecture on schism: not even

by preaching against them in his own place of worship: for this would be "instructing his own people;" and if any others should happen to stroll in, he could not help that, more than he could hinder their buying and reading his books; which, according to his own account, he neither desired nor expected. It is the dictate of common sense that if an author print and publish severe reflections upon any body of men, he not only attacks them, but does it in the most open manner possible. If one of our citizens should write and advertise in the *Gazettes*, a pamphlet, calling all the members of the community, but those of his own sect, traitors and rebels to the government, would Mr. H. or any body else, comprehended in the charge, be satisfied with such an apology as this: "You, have no right, sir, to be offended with any part of my pamphlet. It is true, I have called you a rebel and a traitor, but you should not construe these epithets into an attack upon you; for the least candour will enable you to perceive that I published my pamphlet for the exclusive use of my own connexions?" Would this, we ask, convince Mr. H. or any one else, and send him home perfectly satisfied to be denounced, as a rebel and a traitor, so often as a zealous partisan might judge it conducive to the edification of his own particular friends? We believe not. Neither will the non-episcopalians be satisfied with Mr. H's. apology for himself. They will probably

view it as a stratagem, and not a very deep one, to avoid the unpopularity of appearing as the aggressor. Some of them, too, may consider Mr. H's. books as the continuance of a system of attack which commenced several years ago, when a certain preacher declared to the faces of some of the most venerable ministers in this city, that all clergymen not episcopally ordained, are impostors; their commissions, forgeries; and their sacraments, blasphemy.\*

These aspersions raised a great clamour at the time; and the repetition of them by Mr. H. and

\* The preacher was Mr. WRIGHT; the place, St. Paul's church; the occasion, a deacon's ordination; and the text, of which, to use his own words, he "took leave," in order to give the poor non-episcopalians a *hit*, that injunction of our Lord, "*Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*" That the orator was right in taking this "leave," will hardly be questioned, as he immediately broke through the second precept of his text; and the consequences proved that he had but little skill in the first. The effusion had more of every thing in the serpent, than his wisdom; and more of every thing in the dove, than her innocence.

A circumstance which rendered the attack an outrage, was the care of the episcopal clergy to circulate notice of the ordination, and their solicitude for the attendance of their non-episcopal brethren! One of the latter, who was present, remarked, at the close of the service, with the pith and point of indignant feeling, that "Mr. W. possessed a large stock of confidence, to tell his bishop to his face, that he was an unregenerated man, and no member of the Christian church!" It being well known that the Right Reverend Father in God, SAMUEL, bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of New-York, had been baptized by the Rev. Mr. DUBOIS, one of the ministers of the Reformed Dutch Church. Therefore,—&c. Alas! Alas!

others, though in more decent language, has been loudly censured, as a violation of all the rules of prudence and charity. Of their *prudence* we say nothing. And the offence against charity is not the point of difficulty with us. Nor do we think that the author of "Miscellanies," in declaiming against episcopal "bigotry and superstition," has taken the question by the proper handle. These are, at best, ungracious compliments, which, though they may vent the ire of the writer, contribute little to the emolument of the reader; and are generally repaid with good will, and with large interest. Truth, can admit of no compromise with error, nor does charity require it. They are the truly charitable who point out the way of life, and warn their fellow men of dangerous mistake. Therefore we shall neither dispute the right of an Episcopalian to publish his peculiar sentiments, nor when they happen to bear hard upon others, shall we cry out against their uncharitableness. Our concern is with their truth or falsehood. And as we are far from impeaching the sincerity of Mr. H. and his coadjutors, whatever we may think of their discretion; so our criticisms are intended to apply to them solely as *authors*. For their personal characters, we entertain unfeigned respect. Nor can we be justly charged with violating that respect, though we examine their claim with as little ceremony as they have brought it forward. If the error be ours, let them overwhelm

our darkness with the effulgence of their light—if the error be theirs, God forbid that any human regards should prevail with us to pass it gently by. With the imperial Stoick, we “aim at *truth*, by which no man was ever injured.”\*

They tell us then, that their “priesthood” is the only “authorized ministry”—that the church in which it officiates, is the only one in covenant with God—that where the gospel is proclaimed, communion with this church, by the participation of its ordinances at the hands of the duly authorized priesthood, is the indispensable condition of salvation—that whatever mercy may be extended to those who labour under *involuntary* error, such as *negligently* or *wilfully* continue in a state of separation from the authorized ministry of the church, and participate of ordinances administered by an irregular and invalid authority, are guilty not only of schism, but of contempt of God’s institutions; of rebellion against his government, and of exposing themselves to his awful displeasure. In fewer words, their doctrine is, that non-episcopalians are no part of the Christian church; but are “children of wrath,” and without a single hope founded on covenanted mercy. No “repentance toward God;” no “faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ;” no conformity to his image; no zeal for his glory, can be of any avail. The

\* Ζητῶ τὴν ἀληθειαν ὑπ’ ἧς οὐδείς πώποτε ἐβλεβη.—Mar. Anton. Lib. I. c. 21. p. 50. ed. Grotakeri.



simple fact of their separation from the "authorized," that is to say, from the episcopal "priesthood," mars their religion, and renders it stark naught!

This sweeping sentence of proscription is softened by representing it as "not inconsistent with that charity which extends mercy to all who labour under *involuntary* error." But the relief is not worth accepting. For in the *first* place, so much is necessary to constitute "*involuntary*," or as it is elsewhere called, "*unavoidable*," error, that the instances in which the plea should be substantiated would be rare indeed. Access to means of instruction precludes it effectually. And as there are few districts where this question can be agitated, without episcopalians, or their priests, or their writings, the error must almost always be wilful; in which case the retreat is cut off—and *secondly*, we have no ground to expect even this very precarious mercy, but the *charity* of Mr. H. and his brethren! Warrant from the word of God they have produced none, and have none to produce. If communion with the authorized, or Episcopal priesthood, be to those among whom the Gospel is proclaimed, an indispensable condition of salvation, what possible escape can be left for those who reject it? The very idea of such an escape, however to be effected, is repugnant to that of an *indispensable* condition. No: if the condition be *indispensable*, they who reject it must

perish. And if they who reject it may still be saved, it is not *indispensable*: otherwise, the definition might run thus, *an indispensable condition is that which may be dispensed with!* The alternative then is, EPISCOPACY OR PERDITION!! Prove this, and there is but one way for us: rush into the arms of the Episcopal Church, and the sooner the better! Prove this, and for our part, little as we are inclined to such a transition at present, we will take refuge immediately in her communion! He is a fool who would put his soul in jeopardy for a single moment, by rejecting an “indispensable condition of salvation;” and risk the loss of Heaven upon the credit of the *charity* of Mr. H. and Bishop HORSLEY!! We are sure that the drift, and have little doubt that the design, of a number of Episcopal publications is to force plain people into such a conclusion.

But before the authors can be justified in uttering a syllable which only looks toward such a conclusion, they ought to be perfectly certain of their premises. To unchurch, with a dash of the pen, all the non-episcopal denominations under Heaven; and cast their members, indiscriminately, into a condition worse than that of the very Heathen, is, to say the least of it, a most dreadful excommunication; and if not clearly enjoined by the authority of God, as criminal as it is dreadful. That all those glorious churches which have flourished in Geneva, Holland, France, Scotland,

England, Ireland, &c. since the reformation ; and all which have spread, and are spreading through this vast continent—that those heroes of the truth, who, though they bowed not to the mitre, rescued millions from the man of sin, lighted up the lamp of genuine religion, and left it, burning with a pure and steady flame to the generation following—that all those faithful ministers, and all those private christians, who, though not of the hierarchy, adorned the doctrine of God their Saviour, living in faith, dying in faith ; scores, hundreds, thousands of them going away to their father's house under the strong consolations of the Holy Ghost, with anticipated heaven in their hearts, and its hallelujahs on their lips—that all, all were without the pale of the visible church ; were destitute of covenanted grace ; and left the world without any chance for eternal life, but that unpledged, unpromised mercy which their accusers *charitably* hope may be extended to such as labour under involuntary or unavoidable error ; and this merely because they renounced Episcopacy—are positions of such deep-toned horror as may well make our hair stand up, “like quills upon the fretful porcupine ;” and freeze the warm blood at its fountain. We say this sentence has been pronounced upon millions of the dead and of the living, merely because they were not, or are not, Episcopal. For Mr. H. and his friends have declared in substance, what their famous DODWELL has declared in form.

that, “*the alone want of communion with the bishop, makes persons aliens from God and Christ, and strangers from the covenants of promise, and the commonwealth of Israel!*”\*

We shall hardly be accused of transgressing the bounds of moderation, when we demand for such assertions, proof which demolishes cavil, and shuts the mouth of reply. And if their authors cannot produce it; if they be not ready with demonstration, such as shall make “assurance doubly sure,” they must abide the consequences of their temerity.

What the nature of their proof is, and how it will bear them out, we shall enable the reader to judge before we finish this review. We pause to make two observations.

1. The writers with whom we have to do, lay upon the form of church government a stress which is not laid upon it in the word of God. We are far from insinuating that the question is of small moment; we are persuaded, on the contrary, that it is of great moment; and that Christians are chargeable with much sin for the indifference which prevails among them concerning it. We can never grant that the appointments of our Lord Jesus Christ may be innocently neglected; nor

\* That M. H. treads closely after Dodwell, see “*Companion for the Festivals and Fasts*,” p. 59. And that the author of “*memorial of the late Bishop Hobart*,” if a judgment may be drawn from his remarks upon these Essays, treads equally close. See “*memorial*.”

that any one is excusable for not endeavouring to satisfy himself what these appointments are. But we are very sure that particular views of external church-order, are not the hinging point of salvation. Whether a man shall go to heaven or to hell, will be decided by another inquiry than whether he was an Episcopalian, a Presbyterian, or an Independent. The scriptures have fixed that inquiry to this point, whether he was a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ or not? *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: and he that believeth not, shall be damned.* Again. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* The reverse is, *he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten son of God.* According to these passages, faith in the Lord Jesus as he is exhibited in the Gospel, is "the indispensable condition of salvation."—According to Mr. H. and his compeers, participation of Christian ordinances at the hands of the Episcopal priesthood, is the indispensable condition of salvation. We are not ignorant that in other sections of his book, Mr. H. dwells with interest and force, on the necessity of a living and productive faith. We are glad to see so many things in a strain much more evangelical than pervades most of the ministrations in his church. But this inspires us with the deeper regret on account of the "dead flies" among the precious "ointment." Nor can we suppress our convic-

tion, that in representing an adherence to Episcopacy as “the indispensable condition of salvation,” himself, and DAUBENY, and a legion more, have done much toward misleading men’s minds as to the foundation of eternal hope. That which wounds the bosom of tender piety, and of which we utterly deny the correctness, is their placing the external order of the church upon a level with the merits of our Lord Jesus, in the article of acceptance before God. We are positively told that soundness in the former is “the indispensable condition of salvation;” and faith in the latter cannot possibly be any more. Nay, with respect to non-episcopalians, Episcopacy is of *primary*, and faith in the Redeemer of *secondary*, importance: for we are told again, that “whoever is in *communion* with the *bishop*, the supreme Governor of the church upon earth, is in *communion* with *Christ* the head of it; and whoever is not in communion with the bishop, is thereby cut off from communion with Christ:” and this is said to be a “general conclusion” “established” by “the *uniform* testimony of ALL the apostolic and primitive writers.”\* After perusing the paragraph, we were held in suspense between the gaze of astonishment and the swell of indignation. *Why*, he who is acquainted with facts well knows; these gen-

\* *Companion for the Festivals and Fasts*, p. 59. from Daubeny. Quere. How many bow-shots are such writers off from the territory of “our sovereign Lord the Pope?”

plemen *ought* to know ; and, in due season, others whom it concerns *shall* know. The meaning is not obscure. There is no access to communion with Christ, but through communion with the bishop. Yet, Mr. H. himself being judge, true faith vitally unites its possessor to the Redeemer ;\* and in this “vital union” originates all communion with him. If, therefore, faith in Christ produces communion with him, and this communion is inaccessible but through the medium of the bishop, it follows that faith in Christ is impossible where there is no communion with the bishop : and that all non-episcopalians are, of necessity, infidels. And thus our position is proved, that Episcopacy is held up as of primary, and faith in Christ as of secondary, importance. For as both are “indispensable conditions of salvation,” that one upon which the existence of the other depends, must be the more important of the two. And this is not an example of that sort of priority which obtains in the relation of *means* to *ends* ; the use of the former preceding the attainment of the latter ; so that the end, which is the greater, presupposes and follows the means, which are the less. The case before us, we say, is not of this sort : because we have access to the testimony of God, which must be believed in order to salvation, without going through the gate of Episco-

\* *Companion for the Altar ; meditation for Thursday.*

pacy. It may be urged, that faith in Christ includes the principle of obedience to his institutions; and therefore to resist them, is to show the want of that obedience which flows from faith. Doubtless the faith of Christ does include such a principle. But this no more proves particular views of church order, than it proves particular views of any thing else which is regulated by Christ's authority, to be the "indispensable condition of salvation." Habitual disobedience to any of his known commands will exclude from his kingdom. Yet there are sins both of ignorance and infirmity which consist with a gracious state. And why an error about church-government is not to be classed among these, the Bible has assigned no reason. And if the high church-men will push their own doctrine, it will compel them to excommunicate each other in their turn. For it is no secret that there have been material differences among them on their favourite theme: and nothing can exceed their confusion and mutual contradiction, when they attempt to found their hierarchy on the scriptures.

At times, we acknowledge, they concede the possibility of "penitence" and a "true faith" out of their church, for it is upon this concession that they rest their *charity* for the non-episcopalian. But as their concession is in diametrical repugnance to their argument, it only lets us see that



they flinch from, the consequences of their own doctrine.

Upon the whole, we have the best evidence that they lay an unwarrantable stress upon the form of ecclesiastical order, by erecting communion with their priesthood into an "indispensable condition of salvation." The alarm which they have sounded on this subject, is *vox et præterea nihil*, mere noise; and need give no disquiet to the most timid conscience.

2. Our next observation is, that as Mr. H. and his fellows have denied all communion with Christ, to non-episcopalians they are bound to show, that there is at least, *more* of the truth and efficacy of the gospel in the Episcopal church than in all other connexions. This is not drawing invidious comparisons between Christian denominations, but on their own principles, a perfectly fair comparison between the church of Christ and a set of associations which do not belong to it. We shall account it no hard task to prove as much of the church of Christ according to our views; nor ought they. For assuredly, if there is not within his church much more of power and love, and of a sound mind;" much more of the fear of God; of "receiving Christ Jesus the Lord" and "walking in him;" of *reverential* attendance upon his worship; of domestic and personal godliness; in one word, much more of the spiritual life, and of that "holiness without

which no man shall see the Lord ;” if much more of these things be not found *within* his church than *without* it, “ what doth it profit ?” Will Mr. H. meet the ordeal ? Will he accompany us from temple to temple, from pulpit to pulpit, from house to house, from closet to closet, and agree, that in proportion as there is little or much of “ pure and undefiled religion ” in them, their grade in the scale of Christian churches shall be low or high ? Is it, then, a fact, that in the church which boasts of the only valid ministrations, and the exclusive prerogative of being in covenant with God, there is more evangelical preaching ; more of Christ crucified ; more plain, close, decisive dealing with the consciences of men, upon the things which belong to their peace, than in many of the churches which she affects to despise ? Is it a fact, that her “ authorized priesthood ” are more scrupulous about the preservation of pure communion ; that they object more strongly to the admission of mere men of the world ; and are more active in excluding from their fellowship the openly irreligious, than are others ? Is it a fact, that they adopt more prompt and vigorous measures to expel from their pulpits doctrine which flies in the face of their avowed principles, and is acknowledged by themselves to be subversive of the Christian system ? Is it a fact, that in this “ primitive Apostolic ” church, the sheep of Christ and his lambs are more plentifully fed with “ the bread of

God which came down from heaven?" Or that she has less to attract the thoughtless gay, and more to allure those who become seriously concerned about their eternal salvation, than is to be found in hundreds of churches which she virtually "delivers unto Satan?" Are these facts? We appeal to them who have eyes to see, and ears to hear; especially to them who "have tasted that the Lord is gracious." The interrogatories and the appeal are extremely painful: but we are driven to them by the champions of the hierarchy, who appropriate communion with Christ to their own connexions. We, therefore, put them upon their trial before the bar of scripture, of conscience, and of public criticism. We demand the *evidence* of their exclusive fellowship with the Redeemer; we demand it for our own sakes; we insist upon their showing, according to his word, the superiority of their practical religion both in quantity and quality. If they cannot or will not answer, no rational man will be at a loss for the reason.

An Episcopal church we do know, in which there are hundreds of ministers, and thousands of their people, who are "valiant for the truth;" who exemplify in their own persons the loveliness of the Christian character, and who, with respect to themselves, will never shrink from the strictest investigation. Would to God, we could say as much for all non-episcopalians! But these members of that church who give, in "the fruits of

righteousness," unequivocal proof that the "Spirit of Christ is in them," are not the persons who advance or defend such claims as are set up by MESSRS. DAUBENY and HOBART. On the contrary, they most cordially welcome to their bosoms, as heirs with themselves of the grace of life, all those "who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity:" and they are hated, reviled, persecuted, by those very same high churchmen, who, like Mr. H. and his friends are for confining the covenant of salvation to their own precincts.

We have reached only the threshold of the work which we proposed to enter and examine. But if we have detained the reader with preliminary matter, it is because we could not do justice to the subject without it. He is now in possession of facts and reasonings to show that the actual discussions relative to Episcopacy, are not to be classed with those wrangles of party which amuse ignorant zealots, and disgrace sober inquiry. Nothing less is agitated than the question whether as non-episcopalians, we are to walk in the "faith of the gospel," in "joy of the Holy Ghost," and with a "hope that maketh not ashamed;" or be shut up under condemnation, reprobated by God and man? As we did not begin the controversy; nor engage in it till after long forbearance under multiplied provocation; and not even then, till we felt ourselves called upon, by an imperious sense of duty, to vindicate

the perverted truth, and the absurd ordinances, of our master in Heaven; so, having begun, we shall not desist until we shall have exposed those arrogant pretensions, and fallacious reasonings, which are calculated to distress and deceive the hearts of the simple.

Mr. H. in his preface to this collection, assures the reader that,

“The author of *Miscellanies* has, with great industry, collected together all the arguments against Episcopacy.” p. iv.

We apprehend that Mr. H's zeal, in this paragraph, has outstripped his caution. A man professes to have a very extensive and accurate acquaintance with a subject, when he pledges himself to the public, that “*all* the arguments” on either side of a question relating to it, are contained in a work which he has written or edited. And if the work be defective, especially in material points, he subjects himself to comments most mortifying to his own feelings, most painful to his friends, and not desirable even to his opponents. We, therefore, think, and others may think with us before we shall have done, that Mr. H. ought not to have committed his reputation to the consequences of such an assertion. His reserve ought to have been the greater, as he has taken some pains to invite an examination of his scholarship. This *en passant*. To the book itself.

“The question of Episcopacy,” says the Layman in his 9th number, “is a question of fact, to

be determined by a sound interpretation of the sacred volume." We join issue with him; and not only consent, but insist, that the question shall be decided by the scripture alone. We detract not from the respect due to the primitive fathers, nor decline to meet their testimony, as we shall show in proper season. But in fixing the sense of the scripture, their authority is of no more weight with us than the authority of other uninspired men; that is, we regard not their opinion any further than as it is supported by the strength of their reasonings. The written word is the perfect and exclusive rule of our faith. It would be so, had not a shred of Christian antiquity survived the ravages of time. And if all the fathers from *Barnabas* to *Bernard*, had agreed in reckoning among the institutions of Christ, any thing which is not to be found in the statute book of his own kingdom, it should be no article of our creed; and should have no more sway in our conscience than an assertion of the *Layman* himself, or of his clerical friends. This being understood, let us see how the lines of evidence run.

The author of "miscellanies" had, in No. X. argued the identity of presbyters and bishops from the indiscriminate use which the scripture makes of these official terms. His antagonists flout at this argument, with all imaginable contempt, through every part of the discussion. It is "literally," say they, "good for nothing:" "too

feeble to merit a serious reply." It is "wretched sophistry"—"the old and miserable sophistry of names." But wherein does the sophistry consist? Why Paul is called an "elder;" therefore the Presbyterian argument would prove that Paul was no more than a presbyter. Christ himself is called (*διακονος*) *diaconos*, which is translated a "minister," a "deacon;" therefore the Presbyterian argument would prove, that Christ was no higher than a deacon.

"Presbuteros" (*πρεσβυτερος*) "signifies an *elder man*; whence comes the term *Alderman*. By this new species of logic," (*which, by the way, is at least more than 1400 years old,*) "it might be proved," saith the *Layman*, "that the apostles were, to all intents and purposes, Aldermen, in the civil acceptance of the term; and that every Alderman is really and truly an Apostle." p. 52, 53.

If this argument is correct, the Presbyterians show very small, no doubt. And the Layman is not to blame for stigmatizing it as "wretched sophistry." "The miserable sophistry of names." Yet the reader may be induced to pause, when he is told that men of singular acuteness, learning, candour, penetration, and force of mind, have considered this self-same argument, when fairly stated, as altogether unanswerable. There may perhaps, be some policy in trying to run it down with hard words; for the Layman acknowledges, that the "Episcopalians would *give up their cause at once*, if reduced to the necessity of placing it on such a basis." p. 56. Here the secret is dis-

closed ; if the argument from the scriptural use of official titles is valid, down goes the Hierarchy ! *Hinc illæ lacrymæ !* No wonder that the attempts are so incessant to scowl, and scoff, and laugh it out of countenance. It will not, however, be parted with so easily ; and in listening to a good word for it, the reader may begin to think it possible for a little sophistry to trill from *other* than Presbyterian pens.

In examining the records of the New Testament, we find that the conversion of a number of individuals to the Christian faith, was followed by their organization into a public society under their proper officers. These officers, *without a single exception*, are distributed into the two general classes of *presbyters* or *bishops*, and *deacons* : the former presiding over the spiritual, and the latter over the temporal, interests of their respective charges. This distinction is marked in the strongest manner, and is never confounded. Thus *to the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi with the BISHOPS and DEACONS—a BISHOP must be blameless—likewise must the DEACONS be grave, &c.*

And that the terms *bishop* and *presbyter* in their application to the first class of officers are perfectly convertible, the one pointing out the very same class of rulers with the other, is as evident as the sun “ shining in his strength.” Timothy was instructed by the apostle Paul in the qualities which were to be required in those who *desired the*



*office of a BISHOP.\** Paul and Barnabas *ordained* PRESBYTERS *in every church*† which they had founded. Titus is directed to *ordain in every city* PRESBYTERS who are to be *blameless, the husband of one wife*. And the reason of so strict a scrutiny into character is thus rendered, *for a BISHOP must be blameless.*‡ If this does not identify the *bishop* with the *presbyter*, in the name of common sense, what can do it? Suppose a law, pointing out the qualifications of a sheriff were to say, a *sheriff* must be a man of pure character, of great activity, and resolute spirit; for it is highly necessary that a *governour* be of unspotted reputation, &c. the bench and bar would be rather puzzled for a construction, and would be compelled to conclude, either that something had been left out in transcribing the law; or that *governour* and *sheriff* meant the same sort of officer; or that their honours of the legislature had taken leave of their wits. The case is not a whit stronger than the case of *presbyter* and *bishop* in the Epistle to Titus. Again: Paul, when on his last journey to Jerusalem, sends for the PRESBYTERS of Ephesus to meet him at Miletum; and there enjoins these PRESBYTERS *to feed the church of God over which the Holy Ghost had made them BISHOPS.*|| It appears, then, that the *bishops* to whom Paul refers in his instructions to Timothy, were neither more nor less than plain

\* 1 Tim. iii. 1. † Acts. xiv. 23. ‡ Tit. i. 5. || Act. xx. 17. 28.

*presbyters.* To a man who has no turn to serve ; no interest in perverting the obvious meaning of words ; one would think that a mathematical demonstration could not carry more satisfactory evidence. But conclusive as it would be in every other case, it is in this case, the advocate of the Hierarchy tells us, “ good for nothing,” because Paul is called an “ elder,” and Christ a “ deacon” as well as a “ bishop,” and, therefore, if the argument proves any thing, it proves that neither the apostles nor their Lord, were any higher in authority than our elders and deacons.

May we ask whether “ bishop,” “ presbyter,” “ deacon,” signify *any thing at all* as terms of office, or not ? If they do not, then the scripture has used a parcel of words and names relative to church government, which are absolutely without meaning. This will not be said. Something, therefore, and something *official* too, they must mean. We ask again, whether or not they designate precisely any particular officers, as *mayor, alderman, recorder*, do in the commonwealth ? Or whether, like the term *magistrate*, they merely express authority in general ; so that no judgment can be formed from them as to the grade, or functions of the offices to which they are annexed ? If the former, the assailant of the Hierarchy, its own friends being judges, is invincible, and their citadel is laid in the dust. Of course, they prefer the latter ; and insist that the official title occurring in the

New Testament, can afford no aid in ascertaining what offices Christ hath instituted in his church. If this is their hope, we much fear that it is a forlorn hope indeed.

If our question be not troublesome, we would ask, what is the use of *names* ? Is it not to distinguish objects from each other ? To prevent the confusion which must pervade conversation about *nameless* things ? And to facilitate the intercourse of speech, by compressing into a single term, ideas which, without that expedient, would be protracted through descriptions of intolerable length ? Now if there are not in the New Testament *appropriate* titles of office which distinguish the several officers from each other, there could have been no such titles in use at the time when that book was written ? For it would surpass the credulity of infidels themselves, to imagine that the writers, by purposely omitting the *particular*, and employing only the *general*, terms of office, would throw both their history and their readers into utter confusion. There can be no possible reason for omitting terms characteristic of the several offices, but the fact that no such terms existed. A marvellous phenomenon this ! That an immense society as the Christian church is, should be organized under its proper officers ; should ramify itself through all the nations of the earth ; should have every one of its branches regularly ordered ; and yet be destitute of names by which

the officers might be correctly known; so that when an official term was mentioned, no ingenuity could guess whether an officer inspired or uninspired, ordinary or extraordinary, highest or lowest in the church, was intended!!! Did any thing like this ever happen in the affairs of men, from father Adam, down to this present *A. D.* 1807? Is such a fact consistent with the nature and use of human language? Is it consistent with the operations or the being of any society whatever? If the state of the primitive church with respect to terms of office, were such as the Episcopal argument represents it, she would indeed, have been

*Mostrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui LUMEN ademptum;*

a perfectly unnatural and monstrous production; dark and confused as "Chaos and old Night."

This demonstration that the representation on the part of the Hierarchy cannot be true, accords precisely with scriptural facts. From these, therefore, we shall prove that it is not true. A controversy of moment was referred by the church at Antioch, to the apostles and elders of Jerusalem. Now, if *apostle* and *elder* are not specific terms of office, where is the propriety of the distinction? And to whom was the reference made? Would the description have answered as well if the assembly had been composed *entirely* of apostles; *entirely* of elders; or *entirely* of deacons? Paul and

Barnabas ordained elders (*presbyters*) in every city. Cannot an Episcopalian tell, even from the *name*, whether they-ordained bishops, priests, or deacons? Titus was commissioned by Paul to ordain *elders* in every city: and Timothy received his instructions pointing out the qualifications of men who were to be made *bishops* and *deacons*. Pray, if the *officer* was not precisely designated by the *name*, what sense was there in giving particular instructions relative to each? How were Titus and Timothy to find out what sort of officers the apostle meant? Would any Episcopalian affirm, that under cover of the indefinite terms *elder*, *bishop*, and *deacon*, the good evangelists might have settled down a dozen *diocesans* in every city? or created a score of new *apostles*? Why not? if *apostle*, *bishop*, *presbyter*, *deacon*, are only *general* terms of office, but are not appropriated to any particular orders of officers. Nay, if the Episcopal assertion on this subject is correct, a broad line of absurdity runs through the apostolic writings, and through the whole transactions of the apostolic church.

The simple truth is, that all these terms, *apostle*, *bishop*, and *presbyter*, and *deacon*, were as distinctive, and were annexed to certain officers with as much regularity and exactness, as any official terms can be at this hour. The first was given by our Lord Jesus Christ, to officers commissioned immediately by himself, for the purpose of car-

rying his name and establishing his church among the nations. The last, viz. *deacon*, was given to officers ordained by the apostles to look after the poor. The other, viz. *elder*, or *presbyter*, had long been in use as a specific term of office. It signified a ruler; but a ruler whose power was well defined, and was perfectly familiar to the Jews. *Presbyters* were to be found in every synagogue; and every man in the nation was acquainted with their functions. If ever there was a term which conveyed precise ideas of a particular office, and was too notorious to be mistaken, *presbyter* was that term. By transferring it to rulers in the Christian church, the greatest caution was taken both to prevent misconception of their authority, and to facilitate the organization of Christian societies. As there were Jews every where, and converts every where gathered from among them, there were every where a number prepared to fall, without difficulty, into a regular church connexion, and to train the Gentile believers, to whom the whole system was perfectly new. But they would have talked of *elders* to the day of their death, without the most distant notion of such a ruler as a *diocesan bishop*. These Christian *presbyters* were also *bishops* (ἐπισκοποι.) The former word denoting their authority; the latter, the functions growing out of it. They were, according to the form in which the master had distributed their duties, to execute the office of *presbyters*, by taking

the *episcopate* or *oversight* of the flock. So charges Paul the *presbyters* of Ephesus: *Feed the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you BISHOPS* i. e. *overseers*, or *inspectors*. So charges Peter the *presbyters* of the dispersion: *Feed the flock of God—taking the OVERSIGHT thereof*: the word is *ἐπισκοποῦντες*, which signifies, “*exercising the Episcopal office.*”

If, then, the term *presbyter* or *elder*, had been so long settled; if it denoted an officer as unlike a modern bishop as can well be conceived: and if it was admitted universally into the Christian church, as thus understood, (for there is no intimation of its sense having been changed,) then the allegation of the Hierarchy, that it is an indefinite term, signifying merely a ruler, without reference to his station, is altogether false, and the objection founded upon this allegation is altogether frivolous. On the other hand, the argument founded upon it for the identity of the scriptural bishops and presbyters as rulers in the church, to the exclusion of prelates, is solid and strong; the flings of “good for nothing,” and “miserable sophistry,” to the contrary notwithstanding.

We have derived some amusement from remarking, that while our Episcopal friends pertinaciously deny that any official name in the New Testament is so appropriated to a particular office as to designate the *kind* of officer, they cannot render their own reasoning intelligible without the aid of the very principle which they reject.

“The apostles,” says the *Layman*, “are called presbyters. This proves conclusively that no argument can be drawn, by the advocate of parity, from the promiscuous use of the terms presbyter, bishop, in the sacred writings. If it proves that there is now but one order in the ministry, it proves equally that Paul was upon a perfect level with the elders of Ephesus.”\* Again,

“Christ is called *diaconos*, which is translated deacon, or minister. Therefore Christ was on a level with the deacons of Jerusalem.”

Does not every reader perceive, at the first glance, that the whole force of this objection, which is to put down the advocates of ministerial parity, depends upon the supposition, that presbyter and deacon *are* titles appropriated to particular grades of office? For if they are not, if they denote only office in general; what will the objection say? To try it fairly—substitute *officers*, in the room of *elders*; and the proposition will stand thus: the apostles are called *elders*; therefore, the apostles are on a level with *officers* in the church. This is not likely to fill the “advocates of parity,” with any great alarm. Again,

“The apostle addresses Timothy and him alone, as the supreme governor of the church, [of Ephesus] calling upon him to see that his presbyters preach no strange doctrine.”†

Here the *Layman* uses *presbyter* as a precise term, for a particular grade of officers; and so does the apostle in the epistle referred to, or else the *Layman*’s argument, to quote his own words, “is literally good for nothing.” Nay, he even con-

\* No. 1. *Collec.* p. 8. † *LAYMAN*, No. v. *Collec.* p. 55.



cedes that the term *presbuteros*, elder, is “ordinarily appropriated in the New Testament, to the second grade of ministers;” although, “it is capable of being applied to all the grades.”\* But how we are to discover when it is applied in one way, and when in the other; i. e. when it has a particular, and when a general signification, neither this gentleman nor his reverend associates have been pleased to tell us. If we are to judge from facts, which they recommend as an excellent way of judging, and if we collect facts from their own conduct in the debate, the rule is this, *Presbyter is always a DEFINITE term of office when it makes FOR the prelates, and always an INDEFINITE one, when it makes AGAINST them.* For example: When Timothy is to be proved a bishop, in the genuine prelatical sense of the word, presbyter infallibly signifies the second grade of ministers. This is sober, solid logic, which no man who can put a syllogism together must venture to dispute. On the other side, when Paul, addressing these same presbyters, seems to identify them with bishops; then presbyter is nothing more than a general term of office: and the argument drawn from its being convertible with *episcopos*, or bishop, is “literally good for nothing,” “the old and miserable sophistry of names!”

All this, to be sure, is vastly ingenious, and infinitely removed from sophistry and quibble! But

as imagination is apt now and then to be unruly, we fancied that it is not unlike the Socinian method of defending the inspiration of the scriptures. Let those great luminaries of wisdom, Dr. Priestley and his compeers, patch up the "lame accounts" of Moses; refute the "inconclusive" reasonings of Paul; and otherwise alter and amend the Bible, as their philosophy shall dictate; and, then, the sacred writings will be *inspired* to some purpose! Let the abettors of prelacy interpret terms now one way, and then the contrary way, as it shall suit their convenience, and they will, no doubt, convert the New Testament into a forge for the Hierarchy, and swear in an apostle to superintend the manufacture.

But still, how are we to repel the consequence with which they press us? If presbyter and deacon are definite terms of office, and the apostles are called presbyters, and their Lord a deacon, (*διακονος*) we certainly, by our argument, confound all distinctions: and put the apostles, and their master too, on a level with the ordinary and even lowest officers in the church.

No such thing. The conclusion is vain, because the premises are false. The objection overlooks a distinction which its authors themselves are compelled to observe every hour of their lives; and that is, the distinction between the absolute and relative use of terms. By the *absolute* use of terms, we mean their being applied to certain

subjects in such a manner as to sink their general sense in a particular one. By their *relative* use, we mean their being coupled with other terms which permit them to be understood in their general sense only. To the former class belong all *names* which, however general in their primary ideas, have become appropriated to particular objects. To the latter belong the innumerable applications which may be made of the very same terms, when not thus appropriated. Examples will best illustrate the distinction. *Congress, judge, assembly*, are terms of great latitude, and their applications may be varied without end. When we say a *congress* of bodies, of waters, of people—a *judge* of music, of sculpture, of painting—an *assembly* of citizens, of clergy, of delegates; all the world perceives that these terms are used in their general sense, and can be used in no other. But when we speak of the United States, and say, *the congress, the judges*; or of the state of New-York, and say, *the judges, the assembly*, all the world perceives that the terms are used in a particular sense, and designate precisely certain public officers to whom, and to whom alone, every man, woman, and child, in the country will refer them. Now supposing that certain individuals should remit a litigated point to one of the *judges*, and we should insist that this may mean the *Lieut. Governor*, because the term judge *may* be applied to him, when he sits in the court of errors: and

suppose an opponent to urge that “judge” is an official term appropriated to known officers; and us to reply, your argument is “literally good for nothing,” “the miserable sophistry of names;” judge is a generic term; and by this same mode of reasoning you might prove that every justice of the peace is on a level with the chief justice of the United States, or with God himself, because “judge” is a name given to them all!! Would not this pass for most sage ratiocination, and persuade the public, that whoever should not bow to it, must be either a “miserable” sophist, or an incorrigible dunce? And wherein it would yield the praise of acuteness, closeness, or strength, to the Episcopal objection to the argument drawn by the advocates of parity from the use of *official* terms in the New Testament, we are unable to discern. The mistake in both cases is the same, viz. the confounding the absolute and relative, or as we have explained it, the official and unofficial use of the same term. Make this plain distinction, and the reply of the Hierarchy is ruined. The Lord Jesus is emphatically the SENT of God; and therefore he is called, the *apostle* OF OUR PROFESSION.\* He is also called *the minister* (*diaconos*) of THE CIRCUMCISION:† but never, absolutely, “an apostle,” “a deacon.” Paul and his fellow apostles are often called *diaconoi*, ministers; in such form as this, *ministers* OF GOD, *ministers* of THE NEW TESTA-

\* Heb. iii. 1.

† Rom. xv. 8.

MENT :\* but never, absolutely, “deacons.” They are also called *elders*, or *presbyters*; and for this very good reason, that possessing ordinary as well as extraordinary powers, they frequently participated in the councils, and exercised only the authority, of presbyters.†

Reverse the order : begin with the lowest and go up to the highest officer in the church, and you will not find an instance in which the official name of the superiour is applied to the inferiour. Deacons are no where called presbyters, nor presbyters, apostles. *Cyprian* does, indeed, assert, that “the apostolic authority was manifestly communicated to Epaphroditus.” Where is the proof?

“St. Paul,” says he, “in his epistle to the Philippians, ii. 25, calls him the apostle to the Philippians.” “But I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour and fellow-soldier, but your apostle,” (in our version, your *messenger*.) Accordingly St. Jerome observes, “by degrees, in process of time, others were ordained apostles by those whom our Lord had chosen”—as that passage to the Philippians shows. “I supposed it necessary to send unto you “Epaphroditus, your apostle.” And Theodoret, upon this place, gives this reason why Epaphroditus is called the apostle to the Philippians. “He was intrusted with the Episcopal government, “as being their bishop.” But these are parts of scripture on which the advocates of Episcopacy place the least reliance.”‡

In this paragraph, as in many others, the asser-

\* 2 Cor. vi. 4.

† This matter shall be more fully explained hereafter.

‡ CYPRIAN, No. iii. *Collec* p. 72.

tions of Cyprian, applauded and adopted by Mr. H. display more haste than inquiry, and more ardour than discretion. To force a testimony in favour of Episcopacy, he has contrived, by a false translation of two words, to put into the mouth of the apostle Paul a speech which he never uttered. “St. Paul,” says he, “calls Epaphroditus, *the* apostle to the Philippians.” Paul does no such thing; he would not have spoken truth, if he had. No person, as shall be proved in its place, could be vested with apostolic authority, but by the immediate appointment of Christ himself. Such an appointment Epaphroditus had not; and, therefore, Paul did not, could not, call him “an apostle,” in the official sense of that term; much less “the apostle to the Philippians;” because a permanent connexion with any particular church, like that which subsists between a presbyter and his congregation, or between a prelate and his diocese, was essentially incompatible with the apostolic character. We wonder that Cyprian, while his hand was in, did not fix down Paul himself as the diocesan of Corinth and its dependencies. For his own words to the Christians of that city are, *If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.\** Here occurs, in a fair and honest translation, the very phrase of “an apostle to a people,” which Cyprian fabricated by a gross mis-

rendering of a passage in the epistle to the Philippians. And considering the anxiety with which the New Testament has been searched for prelates, there can be no doubt that if stubborn, most stubborn facts did not stand in the way, Paul would have been made up into a diocesan long ago: and introduced to our acquaintance, with the mitre on his brow, as the bishop of Corinth. But if the declaration, "I am an apostle unto you," is no proof whatever, that Paul filled an Episcopal see among the Corinthians; how can the expression, "an apostle to you," even admitting it to be correct, prove that Epaphroditus was bishop of Philippi? But the words, mangled by *Cyprian* into an "apostle to you,"\* signify just what our common version represents them to signify, "your messenger." The Philippians had sent him with a contribution to the relief of the apostle's wants; as he himself tells us in the fourth chapter. *I have all and abound: I am full; having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you*—v. 18. This is the reason why he is called their messenger. The coupling of the term *apostolos* with "your," takes it out of the predicament of official names, and requires that it be understood in its general sense, which is, "a messenger." It has nothing to do with Episcopal relations, or clerical functions of any sort; say Theodoret what he pleases. It was hardly just to found the title of a

\* ὑμῶν ἀποστολος.

bishop in the murder of a text. But whatever sentence be pronounced on Theodoret, we entirely acquit *Cyprian* from the charge of sinning against knowledge.

*Cyprian* seems also to labour under the inconvenience of a bad memory. For after agreeing with his friend the *Layman* to reprobate all reasoning from words to things ; he lays the whole stress of an argument for the prelatical dignity of Epaphroditus upon a single word. And so mighty is the force of this word in his eyes, that on the strength thereof, he says that the “Apostolic authority was *manifestly* communicated to Epaphroditus.” When the fact turns out to be, that even the word which is to *manifest* this “communication,” has nothing to do with the subject ! And then, to finish neatly, he informs us in the close of the paragraph, that “these are parts of scripture on which the advocates of Episcopacy place the *least reliance*.” They are wise to let the thistle alone after feeling its prickles—But it is rather incongruous to place only “the *least reliance*” upon “parts of scripture” which “*manifestly*” prove the very point they would be at. And no less so, to build their “manifest” proof upon an argument which they themselves have pronounced to be “miserable sophistry,” and “literally good for nothing !”\*

\* These gentlemen are hardly civil to their favourite *Theodoret*, from whom, through Whitby and Potter, they borrowed th



*Verum operi longo fas est obrepere somnum :*

the right to be drowsy, in protracted toil, has become prescriptive. Homer occasionally nodded; and we shall not refuse to *Cyprian* and his colleagues the indulgence of a nap.

The sum is, that the terms *apostle*, *bishop*, *presbyter*, *deacon*, designate, with precision, officers known and established in the apostolic church—That no two of these terms are used interchangeably, excepting “presbyter” and “bishop.” We mean that apostle and bishop; apostle and presbyter; apostle and deacon; bishop and deacon; presbyter and deacon, are never put promiscuously the one for the other: And the reason is, that they *do not signify the same thing*. But that “bishop” and “presbyter” are used interchangeably; so that you may put the one for the other at pleasure, without destroying or obscuring the sense of the sacred writers: and the reason is, and must be, that they *do signify the same thing*; that is, they mark one and the same grade of ecclesiastical rulers. This last proposition, *Theodoret*, fierce as he was for prelacy, has himself advanced. He probably did not observe how fatal it is to the hierarchy, as the discussions on that subject were not, in his day, very deep nor general. But so sensible was Dr. Hammond, the most learned,

“manifest” communication of the apostolic authority—to hold him up with one hand as a venerable defender of their cause; and with the other to lash him as a miserable sophist.

perhaps, of all the episcopal champions, that the argument drawn by presbyterians from the identity of the scriptural bishop and presbyter, is conclusive against prelacy, that he boldly denied the existence of such officers as are now called presbyters, till about or after the death of the apostles.\* In supporting this paradoxical opinion, he

\* “ Although this title of *Πρεσβύτεροι*, *Elders*, have been extended to a second order in the church, and is now only in use for them, under the names of *Presbyters*, yet in the scripture-times it belonged principally, if not alone, to bishops, there being no evidence that any of that second order were then instituted, though soon after, before the writing of *Ignatius’ epistles*, there were such instituted in all the churches.”—HAMMOND, on *Act* xi. 30. p. 380.

How irreconcilably all this is at war with the assertions and reasonings of other learned advocates of the hierarchy, from whom the unlearned ones necessarily copy, we may amuse ourselves with showing in a more convenient place. One or two remarks we cannot suppress. Dr. Hammond does not tell us how these presbyters came into the church, but is pretty sure that they were introduced *after* “the scripture times,” that is, after the canon of the scripture was completed, and “*before* the writing of *Ignatius’ epistles*.” The Dr. then confesses that the order of presbyters as inferior to the bishop, is not of divine right; there being no evidence that any of that second order were instituted in scripture times: consequently, that as Christ had regulated his church, bishops or presbyters, and deacons, had no intermediate officer between them. This is exactly what the presbyterians maintain, and they are much his debtor. But as he saw that their argument would ruin him, as he was utterly unable to controvert its principle, viz. the identity of the bishop and presbyter; and as he was determined not to give up the hierarchy, he had recourse to the extravagant fiction of transforming all the presbyters into Diocesans. But as Diocesans with only deacons, would constitute rather a bald hierarchy, it was requisite, to give eclat to their dignity, to foist in

metamorphoses every presbyter of the apostolic church into a diocesan bishop! The meaning of language shall be inverted: the testimony of the scripture shall be dislocated: the presbyters of the city of Ephesus shall be an assemblage of diocesan bishops collected from all Asia! Truth, probability, and common sense, shall be set at naught—but the object is worth the price; the sacrifice is amply compensated, provided presbyters be banished from the New Testament, and no ruler be seen there unless in the shape of a diocesan bishop! Had only the *Layman* and *Cyprian*, and their friends, been troubled, there had been less cause of surprise. But that an argument “good for nothing;” a bit of “miserable sophistry,” should put Dr. *Hammond*, the ὁ πᾶν, the very Goliath of “the church,” into such a fright as nearly to turn his brain, is strange indeed!

But should the episcopalian be worsted in the contest about the scriptural *titles*, what will be to

another order for which there is no scriptural warrant. And thus at one stroke he has levelled with the ground the whole fabric which the other episcopal workmen have been rearing. For if Timothy and Titus were not Diocesan bishops, as the latter affirm and the Dr. denies; and if they were not metropolitans, as the Dr. affirms, the others deny, and no man living can prove; then one of their famous three orders has vanished away. Of the Dr's supposition that the presbyters were instituted *before* the writings of Ignatius' epistles, the reason is, that they must be found *prior to that date*, or else poor Ignatius must be hung up for forgery.—A notable manœuvre this to save the credit of the principal witness for the Hierarchy.

us the advantage of victory, or to him the injury of defeat, if he shall, nevertheless, establish his claim by scriptural *facts*? So very little, that the choice between victory and defeat, on the first ground, would not be worth a straw to either. Abstractly considered, there is no inconsistency between our own doctrine of the identity of bishops and presbyters, and the episcopal doctrine of a superiour grade. For certainly it does not follow, from the nature of the thing, that because bishop and presbyter mean the same officer, therefore there is no other officer above him. But *as the facts stand*, the case is widely different; and the value of the argument from the scriptural titles lies here, that this superiour order must be found among the bishops and presbyters, or not at all; because, with the exception of deacons, these were the only ordinary officers in the apostolic church. If, then, “bishop” is the same with “presbyter,” the superiour or prelatical order is absolutely unknown to the official language of the New Testament. Presbyters and deacons we meet with in abundance, but not the shadow of a prelate ever crosses our path. Now, that official titles should be conferred upon every grade of officers in the church except the highest; that this officer should have no place in the official catalogue; that he should wander up and down among the churches without so much as a name; that while his subalterns are mentioned particularly and repeatedly,

his own existence and dignity should be a matter of mere inference from his *acts*, so far surpasses all the powers of belief, that the proof of his existence is almost, if not altogether, impossible. This leads to a very short refutation of a plea on which no small "reliance" has been placed by episcopal writers, from *Theodoret* down to the *Layman*; viz. that names of office, like other words, change their signification; and become, in process of time, signs of ideas quite different from those which they originally expressed.

"In Roman history," says the *Layman*, "we find the term *Imperator* at one period applied to designate a general of an army; at another, a magistrate clothed with unlimited civil and military authority. Suppose we should be told that every general of an army was Emperor of Rome; and that the Emperor of Rome was merely general of an army; what would be the reply? That the term *Imperator* had changed its signification. And how would this be proved? By the Roman history, which shows us that the Emperors had generals under them, over whom they exercised authority. Apply this reasoning to the case under consideration. The terms bishop, presbyter, are used promiscuously in the New Testament. Therefore, say the advocates of parity, they designated the same office in the ages subsequent to the apostles. Is this a logical conclusion? Surely not. Names change their signification. Ecclesiastical history tells us, and the most learned advocates of parity have admitted the fact, that the order of bishops existed in the church as distinct from, and superiour to, the order of presbyters, within forty or fifty years after the last of the apostles. The bishops then had presbyters under them, over whom they exercised authority. The offices were distinct from the beginning, bishops being the successors,

not of those who are promiscuously called *bishops, presbyters, elders*, in the New Testament, but of the apostles themselves. Theodoret tells us expressly, “ that in the process of time those who succeeded to the apostolic office, left the name of apostle to the apostles, strictly so called, and gave the name of bishop to those who succeeded to the apostolic office.” No argument, then, can be founded on the promiscuous use of names.”\*

We hardly expected to find the Layman advancing and retracting a doctrine in the compass of a single page. Yet, assuredly, if bishops are not the successors of those who are promiscuously called bishops and presbyters, then these names do designate a precise order of officers, which was the very thing the Layman had denied in the preceding paragraph. That names change their signification is no new discovery. But can this either help the hierarchy, or hurt the advocates of parity? Things are before names; and the changes in things before changes in names. If, therefore, a change has passed upon the signification of official names in the church, since the days of the apostles, that alone proves to a demonstration, that a change has also passed upon the offices themselves; which consequently are not *as the apostles left them*. This is exactly what the presbyterians maintain: and so the episcopal plea returns with all its force upon its authors, and fastens upon their hierarchy the charge of having departed from, and corrupted, the order which Christ appointed for his church, and which the death of his apostles

\* LAYMAN, No. 1. *Collec.* p. 8. 9.

sealed up for permanency. We are not ignorant that the prelatical writers attribute this change of names to a very different cause. The celebrated Dr. Bentley, who, in critical learning, in spirit, and fire, surpasses the most of them, and falls short of none, thinks it was the *modesty* of the prelates\* which induced them to relinquish the name of apostle, and to assume that of bishop. It is hard to estimate the degree of modesty which pervaded an immensely numerous body of prelates† at a period of which we have scarcely any records. The epistles of their tutelar saint, *Ignatius*, do not abound with that lovely virtue; and all the world is witness, that in matters relating to their titles and power, the order has been entirely innocent of such an imputation for fourteen centuries at least. The apostles themselves decorated the prelates, we are told, with their own name and ordinary dignity; they exercised the authority and wore the name, during the life, and in the presence of the apostles; and after their death retained the *dignity*, but renounced the *appellation* out of pure *modesty*! Dr. Hammond has more regard to consistency. He first creates, after the death of the apostles, an inferiour order of clergy; and as they could not well do without a name, he very ingeniously splits up the designation of the pre-ex-

\* *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, p. 186.

† Dr. HAMMOND says there were *twenty-four*, besides the metropolitan, in Judea alone. *Annot. on Rev. iv. 4.*

isting order, giving one half to the prelates, and the other to his new race of officers!

We repeat, that change of *names* pre-supposes change of *things*. This is the natural and necessary course of language. The contrary would reverse the operations of the human mind. *When* the change was introduced, is perfectly immaterial to the argument. When the last of the apostles breathed out his spirit, the authority of the living God “bound up the testimony, and sealed the law among his disciples.” No additions nor diminutions now. And whether the alteration in the government of the church, which produced a corresponding alteration in the names of her officers, took place “forty years,” or forty score of years, or forty hours after the decease of the apostles, is not, with regard to the rule of conscience, worth the trouble of a question. The advocates of parity, do not, as the Layman affirms, infer from the promiscuous use of the terms bishop and presbyter in the New Testament, “that they designated the same office in the ages subsequent to the apostles.” It is of no importance to them, what these terms signified in after ages. They prove that these terms signify in the New Testament, one and the same order of rulers; and therefore insist, that, as the rule of faith and the sense of the scripture are immutable, the same terms must mean, at this hour, the very same thing which they meant as they dropped from the



pen of an apostle. This is enough for them, as they entertain no fear of being unable to demonstrate that the scriptural presbyters are not diocesan bishops; and are the only ordinary rulers which the New Testament, the statute book of Christ's kingdom, recognizes as of his institution. The *subsequent* change of sense in the scriptural titles, as we have more than once observed, proves decisively a change in the original order of the church: for upon no other principle can the other change be explained. The Layman has been peculiarly unhappy, in forcing it upon the notice of his readers. He has only turned "king's evidence," against his party; and, in attempting to parry a Presbyterian thrust, has unwittingly smitten his own bishop under the fifth rib.

The advocates for the Hierarchy labour hard to show that any argument from official names to the offices designated in the New Testament, is inconclusive. They even pronounce it "good for nothing." Their hope is to render the scripture, thus far, neutral; that if it bear no testimony *for* them, it shall bear none *against* them. Whether they have succeeded in this attempt or not, we leave to the dispassionate judgment of the reader, who, with a desire of perceiving and embracing the truth, has deliberately considered what we have already written.

We now follow them to their argument from the

scriptural *facts*, upon which they avowedly rest the weight of their cause.

The *first* of these facts is the triple order of the priesthood among the Jews.

“ We find,” says the Layman, “ three orders of officers in the Jewish church ; and, in the Christian, there have always been three orders answering to these. What Aaron, his sons, and the Levites were in the temple, that bishops, priests, and deacons are in the Church. Such is the concurring testimony of the primitive fathers. Take that of St. Jerome, whom the advocates of parity are fond of quoting, and to whom, therefore, it is presumed, they will not object. “ *That we may know the apostolical economy to be taken from the pattern of the Old Testament, the same that Aaron, and his sons, and the Levites, were in the temple, the bishops, presbyters, and deacons, are in the church of Christ.*” It is too absurd to attempt to turn this parallel into ridicule. By the very same mode of proceeding you may destroy the whole Christian dispensation. In all that he has said upon this point, the miscellaneous writer has contributed much more to the support of infidelity than of any other cause.

“ How far, then, do we carry this argument ?

“ We say, simply, that the law being figurative of the gospel, in all its important parts, the Jewish priesthood was, of course, typical of the Christian. For this we have the express declaration of the apostle Paul, and the advocates of parity will not pretend to controvert the position. Well, then, the priest of the law serving as “ *the example and shadow of heavenly things,*” the circumstance of there being three orders in the Jewish ministry, furnishes a strong presumption against the doctrine of parity. *We do not rely upon this as proof. We merely state it as presumptive evidence, entitled to real attention.* It gives us, we contend, possession of the ground, and throws the burden of proof upon our opponents.

“ Now, what says the miscellaneous writer in reply to all this ? He talks to us of the dress of the Jewish high priests ; asking, very sagaciously, where are the *golden ephod*, the *breast plate*, the *embroidered girdle*, in which Aaron and his successors were clad. I call upon him here to lay his hand upon his heart, and say, whether this is just reasoning. He knows it is not. What, the Jewish priesthood not figurative of the Christian, because of a variety in dress ! Is it necessary, in order that one thing be typical of another, that there should be no points of difference between them ? No more than it is necessary that we should be able to rise to the perfection of the character of Christ, because we are called upon to propose him as the model for imitation, and to become holy as he is holy.

“ Is the miscellaneous writer aware of the conclusion to which his mode of reasoning conducts ? If he has proved that the Jewish priesthood was not typical of the Christian, he has proved, equally, that the law was not a shadow of the gospel ; thus destroying, effectually, all connexion between the Old and New Testament. Is there no difference between our Saviour and the Paschal Lamb by which he was prefigured ? Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, were all types of Christ ; but were there no points of distinction between these men and the Saviour of the world ? Give to the infidel the weapons of this writer, and how easily will he demolish, with them, the whole fabric of Christianity ! If the points of difference which have been mentioned, between the priesthood of the law, and of the gospel, prove that the one was not typical of the other, they equally prove that our Saviour was never prefigured, and that that intimate connexion, between the Jewish and Christian dispensations, which has been so much relied upon by the defenders of the faith, never existed but in the imagination of men. But I feel as if I were insulting the understanding of the reader, in dwelling on this point. I dismiss it, therefore, especially as I have not been

able to bring myself to believe that the writer had any thing more in view, in it, than a flourish of rhetoric to attract the vulgar gaze.

“The Mosaic dispensation, then, was figurative of the Christian. The priesthood of the law was typical of the priesthood of the gospel. The former consisting of distinct and subordinate orders, a strong presumption thence arises in favour of that distinction and subordination of office which, until the days of Calvin, characterized, without a single exception, the Christian church. This we contend, as was said before, gives us possession of the ground, and throws the burden of proof upon the advocates of parity.

“So much then for the Jewish priesthood. It was a shadow of the Christian priesthood, according to the express declaration of the apostle Paul. While the miscellaneous writer does not venture openly to deny this, but rather seems to admit it, in representing the whole Jewish system as typical, he endeavours, nevertheless, in an indirect manner, to destroy all relationship between the priesthood of the law and of the gospel, by dwelling on the variety of dress, with some other subordinate points of distinction. Here he acts with his usual imprudence ; tearing up, in his rage, against Episcopacy, the very foundation of the Christian faith.”\*

The same analogy is thus traced by Cyprian :

“Why should not the orders of the priesthood under the old economy be supposed to typify those orders that were to be established under the new ? Besides, the fact is, that the Christian dispensation was not so much the abolition, as it was the fulfilment of the Jewish. Christ came, not to *destroy* but to *fulfil* the law and the prophets.

“It is true, indeed, we possess not the Jewish form of church government. We possess one, however, which is the consummation of the Jewish—a government of which the

Jewish was an imperfect image. We possess a priesthood more glorious than the Levitical, inasmuch as it ministers under a more glorious dispensation—inasmuch as it performs purer and more exalted offices—inasmuch as, in its nature and offices, it is the glorious substance which was only faintly shadowed out under the law.

“ We think, therefore, that we stand on substantial ground when we maintain that we *derive a strong argument in demonstration of the divine origin of our form of church government*, by showing that on this point the new dispensation is made to correspond with the old ; is made the true substance of which the old was the shadow. What the high priests, the priests, and the Levites, were in the temple, such are the bishops, the presbyters, and deacons, in the church of Christ. This is the uniform language of the fathers. This is the conclusion to which the *data afforded us by the apostles inevitably lead*.

“ Such was the model of church government instituted by God himself, and intended to be transmitted through all ages, with modifications that should vary, no doubt, according to the varying circumstances of mankind ; provided these modifications affected not its great and cardinal principles. We say that the Jewish priesthood was the image of the Christian. We say that it is sound reasoning to deduce the probable form of the substance from the lineaments of it that may be traced in its image.”\*

It is somewhat curious to observe the rapid *growth* of this argument from the Jewish to the Episcopal priesthood. With the Layman it is not *proof* ; it is merely “ *presumptive evidence*, entitled to real attention.” By the time it has travelled to Cyprian, it is a “ *strong argument in demonstration*

of the divine origin of their form of church government ;” and it places them, as well it may, “on substantial ground.” But while we are looking through Cyprian’s magnifier, at this Jewish image of the “Christian priesthood,” he suddenly shifts his glass, and the giant, DEMONSTRATION, dwindles down again into the dwarf, PROBABILITY. “We say,” adds he, in the next paragraph, “that it is sound reasoning to deduce the *probable* form of the substance from the lineaments of it that may be traced in its image.” One hardly knows what to do with writers who drive their argument backwards and forwards between “proof” and “presumption ;” between “probability” and “demonstration ;” as if a rational debate were a game at shuttlecock ! But they are not without excuse ; for to one who can see the tendency of this argument of theirs, it is pretty clear that they did not know what to do with themselves. For if, as they assure us, the Jewish was a *type* of the Christian priesthood—if the former was “a shadow,” and a “faint shadow,” of which the latter is the true and “glorious substance,” then there *must be* a coincidence between the essential parts of the type, and the essential parts of the thing typified. But according to the divine institution, the three orders of the high priest, the priests, and Levites, were essential to the legal priesthood ; and if this was typical of the evangelical “*priesthood*,” there must of necessity be three orders in that also. If

it were not so, the type would not tally with the antitype, the image would not represent its object, and the end of the typical system would be defeated. A body with a head would as soon cast a shadow without one, as a type of three orders represent a reality of two, five, or seven. This reasoning supposes, that the *number* of orders enters into the *nature* of the type; and on the same supposition rests the Episcopal argument. For if the number of orders in the Jewish priesthood constituted no part of the type, it is extreme weakness to mistake it for a "demonstration," or even a "presumption," that there ought to be three orders in the thing typified. It is producing your type to prove that the thing typified possesses a property which the type does not exhibit. The fallacy is too obvious to impose upon a child.

On the other hand, if the *number* of orders in the Jewish priesthood makes a part of the type, and the Christian ministry is the thing typified, the conclusion is inevitable, that there *must* be three orders in the Christian ministry. If *such* a typical relation really exists between the ministry of the old and of the new economy, we will lay down our pen. Our cause is desperate; the hierarchy has triumphed, but not a Protestant hierarchy. For according to all the laws of typical analogy, it is not more necessary that there be three orders in the "Christian priesthood," than that the highest order be confined to a single person. In this

point the Jewish and the Episcopal priesthood differ *essentially*. There is no likeness between the type and the antitype. Who, that intended to institute a set of *resemblances*, would ever dream of appointing a numerous body of Levites to represent a numerous body of deacons; a numerous body of priests to represent another numerous body of priests; and then finish by putting at the head of his system a *single high priest*, to represent an order of ten thousand bishops? Nay, if the Episcopal argument here is sound, it concludes much more forcibly in favour of the Papal than of the Protestant hierarchy. The former preserves, in her single pontiff, an essential feature of the type, which the latter, by her order of bishops, has perfectly obliterated. Thus, then, the case stands; if the typical character of the Jewish priesthood does not include its orders, the Episcopal inference from them in behalf of the bishops, priests, and deacons, is palpably false: If it does, while the Presbyterian perishes, the church of Rome gains much more than the church of England.

But this notion of the typical property of the grades of priesthood in the Jewish church, is an Episcopal fiction. It has no real existence. The decisive proof is, that the Levitical priesthood typified our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom there could be no place for different orders. Its several grades, as such, had nothing to do with its typical



character and functions. These lay in another direction altogether.

We, therefore, advance a step higher, and deny the whole doctrine of the hierarchy, in so far as it makes the Jewish priesthood a type of the Christian ministry. The Layman has asserted that "the law being figurative of the gospel, in all its important parts, *the Jewish priesthood was, of course, typical of the Christian.*"\* To the same purpose Cyprian, "*We say that the Jewish priesthood was the image of the Christian.*"† These are the assertions; now for the proof. Cyprian tells us, that it "is the uniform language of the fathers—the conclusion to which the data afforded us by the *apostles inevitably lead.*" The Layman, that "for this," viz. that the "Jewish priesthood was typical of the Christian, we have *the express declaration of the apostle Paul,*" and that "the advocates of parity will not pretend to controvert the position." But they certainly do, sir; confident as you are of the negative. They not only venture to controvert, but engage to refute, your position. They maintain that the apostles have not afforded any data which can lead to such a conclusion. Cyprian has mentioned none: and the only passage which the other has quoted in his own justification, he has misunderstood and misapplied. The considerations which make against them, are numerous and weighty.

\* No. VIII. *Collec.* p. 310.

† No. IV. *Collec.* p. 320.

1. The scriptures no where draw a parallel or comparison between the rank and functions of the ministry of the Old Testament and that of the New. And if the former was designed to be the model of the latter, the omission is altogether unaccountable. They neither say nor insinuate that the priests under the law were a type and image of which the truth and substance are to be sought in the ministers of the new dispensation. The nature and use of the legal institutions are explained with minute accuracy by the Apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews. He treats them as types of "Jesus Christ, and all the effects of his mediation in grace and glory;" but of their typical relation to the Christian ministry, not a single syllable.

Here the Layman interrupts us with "the express declaration of the apostle Paul." Let us have it. "The priests of the law serving as '*the example and shadow of heavenly things*,' the circumstance of there being three orders in the Jewish ministry furnishes a strong presumption against the doctrine of parity."\* The "express declaration" of the apostle, it seems is, that "*the priests of the law serve as the example and shadow of heavenly things*;"† representing his meaning to be, that the priests of the law are that example and shadow. We have a small objection to this assertion of the Layman; and that is, that, like Cyprian's story of

\* No. viii. *Collec.* p. 110.

† P. 111.

bishop Epaphroditus, it puts into the mouth of the apostle a speech which he never uttered. There is neither in the passage quoted, nor in any other passage of the epistle to the Hebrews, nor in the whole New Testament, such a declaration as the Layman ascribes to Paul. He has either quoted from memory, which we suspect to be the fact, and so has forgotten what the apostle said; or else is as unlucky in his criticism as his poor friend Cyprian. The apostle says, "*the priests who offer gifts according to the law, serve,*" not AS, but "UNTO *the example and shadow of heavenly things.*" It was not the *priests*, but the *things to which they ministered*, that constituted the "example and shadow." This is obvious upon the first inspection of the text.\* The apostle is discoursing of the tabernacle, its furniture and service. These were the "example and shadow." The substance, the "heavenly things," was Christ Jesus, his sacrifice and intercession, with all their blessed effects in the salvation of men. This is the apostle's own interpretation. For these same priests whom he here describes as "serving unto the example and shadow of heavenly things," he elsewhere describes as "serving the *tabernacle.*"† The tabernacle, therefore, not the priests, were the "example and shadow of the heavenly things." And that

\* Οἱ πρεσβυτέρους ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιά λατρεύουσι τῶν ἐπουρανίων. Heb. viii. 5.

† Οἱ τῇ σκηνῇ λατρεύοντες. Heb. xiii. 10.

this is the apostle's meaning, is "yet far more evident." For in the 9th chapter, after detailing the construction, the furniture, and the service of the tabernacle,\* he says that this tabernacle, thus framed, equipped, and attended, was *a figure for the time then present.*† "But Christ being come," proceeds the apostle, "an high priest of good things to come, by (*through*) a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building: neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

This "greater and more perfect tabernacle," is the human nature of the Son of God, in virtue of the once offering up of which as a sacrifice for sin, he entered into heaven itself for us. It is this blood of his, typified by the "blood of goats and calves," which "purges our conscience from dead works to serve the living God." These are the "good things to come;" these "the heavenly things," of which the first tabernacle was the "example and shadow." The "Christian priesthood," as it is improperly and offensively termed, does not even appear in the comparison. If the Layman has discovered it among the "heavenly things," his penetration is acute indeed. Instead, therefore, of producing an "express declaration" of the apostle to support his doctrine, he has only put a

\* Heb. xiii. v. 2—7.

† v. 9.

text to needless torture ; for his witness, like Cyprian's in the affair of Epaphroditus, knows nothing of the matter.

It is further worthy of notice, that the New Testament *never* applies to the Christian ministry those terms which express the office of a priest, and which were invariably applied to the priesthood of the law. Jesus Christ is called a priest, an high priest, a great high priest ; but not his ministers. On the principle that he is the true priest whom the priests of the law prefigured, this is perfectly natural. But is it not inconceivable, that the appropriate title of the priesthood should be given to the typical priests ; to the form—to the shadow—and uniformly withheld from the priests who are the substance represented by them ? Why this change of language ? If the priestly character, office, and work, have been fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ, and if he, as the sole priest of the church, is now appearing in heaven for us, the reason of the change is as clear as noon day. There are no more official priests, there is no more “priesthood,” in the church upon earth ; and therefore the name is laid aside. But if there are such priests and priesthood, and if these are the very substance of which the old priests were but a shadow, it will baffle all the ingenuity of the hierarchy to the end of time, to assign even a tolerable reason why the spirit of wisdom has refused them their official designation,

and has altered the whole official style of the church! The ministry under the new dispensation is represented as the ascension gift of our glorified master.\* Ordinary and extraordinary officers are enumerated, but not a word of the Jewish orders being a type of the Christian ministry. Not a word of priests or priesthood, of altars, of sacrifices, or any of the sacrificial language to which the hierarchy is so devoted. She has thought fit, and she shall answer for it, to bring back and affix to her clergy and their functions; to her sacramental table and its elements, a set of denominations which the Holy Ghost not only never annexed to the ministry and ordinances of his own creation; but which he had, with pointed care, excluded from the New Testament!

Our assertion, therefore, stands firm, that the apostolic writings furnish no data which can lead us to the "conclusion" of Cyprian, or the "position" of the Layman. Whence, we again ask, whence this silence? Why is so important a property of the typical priesthood overlooked? Is not the "glorious substance," of which it was only a "faint shadow," so much as worthy of notice? and that too in a set treatise of the legal shadows and their corresponding substances? It is indisputable, their own words evince it, that if the Layman and Cyprian, and their several coadjutors, had prepared such a treatise; whatever place they might

\* Eph. iv. 11.

have allotted to the "apostle and high priest of our profession," the dignity of the episcopal priesthood would have filled up one of their most animated chapters. Having found so much of their own image where Paul found so little, it is but right to supply his deficiencies, and to administer a delicate rebuke for his negligent exposition!

2. A comparison of the Levitical with the Episcopal priesthood, will demonstrate that the former was not, and could not be, a type of the latter.

The grades are ranged thus:

<i>Type, or Shadow,</i>		<i>Antitype, or Substance.</i>
HIGH-PRIEST,	- - - -	BISHOP,
PRIEST,	- - - -	PRIEST,
LEVITE,	- - - -	DEACON.

Now in what do they resemble each other?

Did the high priest *ordain* the priests? No. Did he *confirm* the people? No. Had he the exclusive right of government? No. On the other hand; Do the bishops discharge any duty analogous to the offering up of the yearly sacrifice on the great day of expiation? No. Have they the peculiar privilege of entering into the immediate presence of God? No. Is the oracle of God attached to their persons? or have they any special right of declaring the divine will? No. He who has sagacity enough to detect in the appropriate functions of the high priest any thing that deserves to be called a type of the functions appropriated to a Christian bishop, can never be at a loss for type

and antitype, so long as any two objects remain within the bible or without it. Their prerogatives and offices are so absolutely dissimilar, that to make the one an image of the other, is to pour overwhelming ridicule upon the whole system of typical ordinances. The success will not be much better, if we go down to the second and third grades of the priesthood. If the reader has an hour which he cannot employ more profitably, he may throw it away in hunting for likenesses between the priests of the law and of the gospel; between the Levite and the Episcopal deacon. We have enough of it. Our argument is this, that as typical officers must have typical functions, if the functions of the legal priesthood did not typify those of the Christian, then was not the one priesthood a type of the other. To insist upon a typical meaning in the number of orders, and to discard as mere circumstances, the respective functions of those orders, is a distinction which reason laughs at, and a sound head will hardly adopt.

3. As typical officers and typical functions are correlate ideas, the former necessarily implying the latter, we remark, that if the Jewish priesthood prefigured the Christian ministry, as a type its antitype, then it follows, that we have in the functions of the priesthood now, the substance of that which in the functions of the Levitical priesthood was only a type. That is, the priests now



offer up the true sacrifice for sin, and are our mediators and intercessors with God, upon the footing of their sacrifice. It cannot be doubted that the *priestly* office of old was typical; and its sacrifices typical. Whoever, then, is the real priest, offers the real sacrifice. But he is the real priest of whom the priests of the law were a type. And the priests of the law were a type, says the hierarchy, of our priesthood: therefore the priesthood of the hierarchy offer up the true sacrifice for sin! There is no getting rid of the conclusion. The apostle Paul reasons in the same manner, from the typical relation of the old priests and their sacrifices to Jesus Christ and his sacrifice. He insists, that because they were shadows and Christ the substance, therefore Christ, the true priest, has put away sin by the offering up of himself as the true sacrifice. We see that the doctrine of the hierarchy is irreconcilable with that of the apostle. He teaches that the Levitical priesthood and their offerings were typical of Jesus Christ and his offerings. The hierarchy teaches that the Levitical priesthood typified the evangelical ministry. Both cannot be true. The same type cannot signify a single high priest who offered up a true and proper sacrifice for sin, and an order of priests who offer up no such sacrifice. If Christ is the substance of the legal priesthood, the Episcopal hierarchy is not. If that hierarchy is the substance, Jesus Christ is not. The reader

has his choice, whether he will side with the hierarchy at the expense of the apostle, or with the apostle at the expense of the hierarchy! Whether he will look for the substance of the Levitical priesthood in the Son of God and his mediatorial work, or in the administration of the Episcopal clergy! Whether—But we check ourselves. A stranger instance of infatuated zeal has rarely occurred. The genius of the Old Testament types shall be perverted; their beautiful correspondence with their objects shall be marred; the principle of a whole book of the New Testament, (the Epistle to the Hebrews,) shall be set aside; but an argument, though merely a presumptive one, for the hierarchy, shall not be given up!

The only escape from this dilemma appears to be through a distinction between the particular character of the Old Testament priests as such, and their general character as ministers of religion. It may be yielded, that in the former they were types of Christ; and maintained that in the latter they were types of the Christian ministry. The distinction is of no avail; and its best effect is to protract the death of the Episcopal plea for a minute longer. If both their particular character as priests, and their general character as ministers of religion were typical, they were nothing but types. The worship which they offered up was typical worship; their prayers were typical prayers; their instructions to the people, typical

instructions. The church in which they ministered was a typical church. All was type. There was no reality. But this is absurd. God had as real a church, and dispensed as real blessings, by real ministers before, as since, the evangelical dispensation. Whatever typical *ordinances* might be set up, the church itself never was a type. It is a *whole*, and one part of a whole cannot be a type of another part. And as there were real ministers in a real church under the law, if you will have them to be types in their general character, you make the ministry of the church at one period and in one form, the type of her ministry at another period under another form. This is a contradiction. For the same persons could not be, at the same time, and in the exercise of the same functions, under the same relations, both shadow and substance. It destroys also the nature of the church of God; giving us all type before the new dispensation, and all substance after it. So that in fact, according to the scheme we are considering, there was no such thing as a church at all under the law, but only the *shadow* of a church. We have one step further in this typical climax. The sinners under the law were only typical sinners; the saints only typical saints; the salvation of the soul only a typical salvation; and for aught we can see, the God of salvation only a typical God!

View it in any light you choose: The doctrine

of the Layman, Cyprian, &c. concerning the Old Testament types, is inconsistent with itself; with the doctrine of the apostle Paul, and with all the known relations of type and antitype. Yet while they are spreading this confusion; while they are displaying the most absolute want of acquaintance with both the Old Testament and the New, they have the assurance to tell us that if we “have proved that the Jewish priesthood was not typical of the Christian, we have proved equally that the law was not a shadow of the gospel: thus destroying effectually, all connexion between the Old Testament and the New.”\* It seems, then, that although we have Christ the true priest and true sacrifice; and the effects of his mediation in pardoning sin, in purging the conscience, and in presenting an efficacious intercession before God in the highest heavens—we have nothing to the purpose; we are “destroying the whole Christian dispensation;” we are doing “much more to the support of infidelity, than of any other cause;”† we are tearing up the very foundations of the Christian faith”—Why?—because we will not admit the episcopal clergy to be the substance of which the Levitical priesthood was only the shadow! It is amazing, it is humiliating, that men who have need that *one teach them which be the first principles of the oracles of God*, should talk so confidently. Nay, in the very act of sanctioning

\* LAYMAN, No. viii. p. 110.

† P. 110.

all this misconception, misconstruction, and wresting of the scriptures, Mr. H. has permitted himself to ask Dr. Linn, whether he is “really *ignorant* of the nature of the types of scripture,” or whether he is “guilty of wilful *misrepresentation*?”\* Such questions as these ought not to have been put by Mr. *Hobart*.

So much for the first fact to which the disputants for the hierarchy have appealed.

Their *second* fact, is the triple order of the “priesthood” during our Lord’s personal converse with men.

“Whilst our Saviour remained on earth,” (says Cyprian,) “he, of course, held supreme authority in his church. The twelve were appointed by him as his subordinate officers. The seventy disciples constituted a still lower order. There existed, then, in the church of Christ, at this time, *three distinct grades* of ministers. When our Lord ascended into heaven, when he breathed upon the twelve, and said, “As my father hath sent me, so send I you,” he transmitted to them the same authority which he himself had retained during his continuance amongst them : the twelve commissioned their presbyters and deacons to aid them in the administration of ecclesiastical government. Before their death they constituted an order of ministers to whom they conveyed that supreme authority in the church which was lodged in their hands during their lives.”†

Thus, also, the Layman :

“Jesus Christ commissioned twelve, and the seventy ; but he gave them no authority to commission others. The high power of ordination was exercised by himself alone. Here,

\* Note to *Collec.* p. 37.

† CYPRIAN, No. II. *Collec.* p. 62.

then, were three orders; our *Saviour*, the great head of the church; the twelve *apostles*; and the seventy *disciples*.”\*

We should be much entertained, and possibly edified, by the history of the three orders and their succession, as compiled by the Layman and his learned colleague, were we not disturbed by some difficulties which we cannot well remove.

Our *first* difficulty, as to this second stage of the triple order, relates to John the Baptist. He was certainly the Redeemer’s messenger, and exercised a contemporary ministry. Why is he left out of the list? His extraordinary functions cannot be the reason; for those of his master were more extraordinary than his own. But he was neither the Christ, nor one of the twelve, nor one of the seventy. If you take him into the catalogue, you have *four* orders; if you leave him out, you must leave out his master likewise; and then you will have but *two*. In either way the history of the hierarchy sticks.

Our *next* difficulty relates to the co-existence of the Jewish and Christian priesthoods. The church of God was either organized under the Christian form, during our Lord’s continuance upon earth, or not. If not, there was no Christian priesthood, and consequently no orders of priesthood. If she was, then did she actually subsist under two forms at the same time. For it is certain that the legal form remained, till the offering up of the “word

made flesh," in sacrifice for sin. Moreover, our Lord Jesus Christ was indubitably the head of the church under her Jewish form. She was, with her whole system of worship, his property. *He came unto his own.\** He was in the temple, the lord of the temple, and acted as such. Now if his personal presence as the head of the church made him an order in her evangelical ministry, that same presence in the Jewish church made him one of the orders of the Jewish priesthood. Admit this, and we are troubled with an additional order in that priesthood; deny it, and we have lost one of the Christian orders. The former compels us to take *four*, the latter allows us but *two*. Scylla and Charybdis over again for the history of the *three* orders!

Our *third* difficulty relates to the principle upon which, in the present case, the triple order is founded. The Layman and Cyprian, as a shoal of other writers had done before them, work up the apostles and seventy disciples into two orders of priesthood; and that their canonical number might not be wanting, they complete it by adding the Redeemer himself!

Now, we had always thought, with the apostle Paul, that Christ was *faithful as a son over his own house*: that the church itself is the house; and that all the ministers of the church are his *servants*. It was really a stroke worthy of "giants in theology,"

\* Εἰς τὰ ἰδία ἦλθε. John i. 11.

to make the Lord himself one of the orders among his own servants ! And seeing that his ascent into heaven never stript him of any relation to his church, and that he actually exercises the priestly office at this moment before the throne of God, the consequence is, either that there are now *four* orders of the priesthood, or that there were but *two* in the days of his flesh. The same perplexity stares the hierarchy once more in the face ; and if she will have three orders, neither more nor less, she must depose her master in order to make way for her bishops !

Our *fourth* difficulty relates to the *nature* of the succession.

Christ transmitted to the twelve, says Cyprian, “ the *same authority* which he himself had retained during his continuance among them ; and the twelve commissioned their presbyters and deacons to aid them in the administration of ecclesiastical government,” and “ before their death, constituted an order of ministers to whom they conveyed” their own “ *supreme authority*.”

Some how or other, we have lost the seventy disciples in this arrangement. Probably they were promoted to bishopricks. However that be, the descent of “ power” is very distinctly stated. Christ conveyed the *same authority* which he himself exercised to the apostles ; and the apostles conveyed the *same authority* which they exercised to the order which they constituted before their



death ; that is, the order of bishops. So, then, the order of bishops have now the *very same* authority which Christ himself had when he was upon earth ! But Christ was the “ lord and master ” of the church ; so are the Bishops ; and for that reason are very properly styled, in some places, *Lords bishops* ! Christ was the *proprietor* of the church—so are the bishops, no doubt ! Christ had authority to appoint sacraments and to mould the government of his church according to his pleasure : so have the bishops, beyond controversy ! It seems, then, that they are the successors not so much of the apostles, as of the Lord Jesus Christ himself : that he is gone away to heaven, and has deputed to them *in solidum*, by the lump, the whole authority which he himself possessed ! A fair inheritance we own ; and very goodly heirs ! Having established this point, we wonder that they put themselves to any further trouble in making out their title to “ the pre-eminence ! ” There is a short cut to the resolution of every difficulty about the affairs of the church, and every thing else. Go to the bishops ! Christ had unlimited authority over the conscience, and they have succeeded him. Ecclesiastical history is not barren of instances wherein they have acted up to the spirit of their trust. England can witness, that, in one day, they threw upon the mercy of the persecutor, and the comforts of famine, *two thousand* of the best men and the most glorious ministers of the gospel, that ever

blessed a nation or adorned a church: and a great proportion of them for not submitting to impositions upon conscience for which the warrant of the divine word was not so much as pretended. But the Episcopal warrant was perfectly clear: and the Puritans were righteously deprived for not bowing to the successours of Jesus Christ! "Come set us the five mile act to music."\* Let us compensate the fast of the 30th January for the martyrdom of Charles,† with the festival of St. Bartholomew's,‡ for the judgment of the Presbyterians!

\* An act of 17th Charles II. by which non-conformist ministers were prohibited, unless in crossing the road, to come or be, on any pretence whatever, after March 24th, 1665, within *five miles* of any city, town corporate, or borough that sent burgesses to parliament; or within five miles of any parish, town, or place, wherein they had, since the act of oblivion, been parson, vicar, or lecturer, &c.; or where they had preached in any conventicle.

† Charles I. of tyrannical memory, was beheaded on the 30th January, 1649. He called himself, and was called by some others, *a martyr*. The anniversary of his martyrdom has afforded the High church clergy many fine opportunities for displaying their zeal for "the church," and mourning over her calamities.

‡ The famous "*Act for the uniformity of public prayers and administration of sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies, &c., in the church of England;*" which received the royal assent on the 19th May, 1662, and took effect on the 24th of August following, being *St. Bartholomew's day*. Assent and consent to its provisions were to be declared by that day, on pain of deprivation of their livings, if the offenders were in the ministry; and if schoolmasters or tutors, three months imprisonment and a fine of five pounds sterling. About *two thousand* ministers could not, with a good conscience, comply; and they were deprived accordingly.

They who can persuade themselves that the Episcopal prelates enjoy the same power, which was vested in our Lord Jesus Christ, are welcome to their consolation. *We* are, as yet, a great ways off from the line of converts.

Our *fifth* difficulty relates to the question, whether the twelve were really a superiour order to the seventy? We cannot perceive in the New Testament any characters of such superiority. On comparing the history of their appointment, we find their commission was the same both in form and in substance; that they had the same powers, the same instructions, the same cautions, the same support; in short, that their whole mission was the same. Let any man of common candour read the account of it in Matthew and Luke; and let him discover, if he can, any thing that bears the semblance of a superiour and inferiour order. To facilitate his inquiry we subjoin the passages alluded to—

*The TWELVE :*

*Matthew ix. 37—x. 16.*

“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power

*The SEVENTY :*

*Luke x. 1—16.*

“After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few : pray ye therefore, the

*The TWELVE.*

against unclean spirits, to cast them out; and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; the first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus. Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot who also betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And, as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass, in your purses; nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there

*The SEVENTY.*

Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you; and heal the sick that are therein; and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city. Wo unto thee, Chorazin! wo unto

*The TWELVE.*

abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it : but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city. Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves ; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. He that receiveth you, receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me."

*The SEVENTY.*

thee, Bethsaida ! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. He that heareth you, heareth me ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me ; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me."

If, after all, the twelve were an order superiour to the seventy, the evidence, whether in these or other parts of the evangelical narrative, is too subtle for our clumsy senses. The Layman, however, whose perceptions are not so dull, has been more fortunate. Let us betake ourselves to his aid.

"The twelve," says he, "were superiour to the seventy, both in *dignity* and *power*."

They were superiour in "*dignity*."

How is this proved ? Thus—

1. "The apostles are every where spoken of,

as the constant attendants of our Lord." Therefore, they were of a higher rank than the seventy! The Layman is as active as he is sharp-sighted; but the ditch between his premises and his conclusion being rather too wide for us to leap, we cannot conveniently follow him.

But the Layman has forgotten that there were others, beside the apostles, who are mentioned as the constant attendants of our Lord,\* and who received from that circumstance no pre-eminence of authority whatever. The Layman's first argument, then, is "good for nothing."

2. "The commission of the apostles was much more general" than that of the seventy. The latter "were sent before our Lord into the cities *whither he himself would come.*" The former were directed "to preach the gospel to all the Jews." A minister, therefore, who should be instructed to make a preaching tour through the United States, would be of a higher grade than one whose labours should be confined to the state of New York. If this argument of the Layman is not very satisfactory, it is at least ingenious. There is something vastly pleasant in regulating the grandeur of the priesthood by the length of a journey; and determining its grades with a pair of geographical compasses!

3. "The inauguration of the twelve was much

\* Acts i. 21.

more solemn than that of the seventy." Therefore they must be of a superiour order. Because as the world knows that it is impossible to appoint, though on different occasions, officers of the same rank without the very same degree of solemnity. This is demonstration! Is it not, good reader? But in what was the inauguration of the twelve more solemn than that of the seventy?

"In relation to the first," replies the Layman, "we find our Saviour directing his disciples to pray to God to send labourers into the harvest. We find him continuing himself a whole night in prayer. In the inauguration of the seventy there was nothing of all this solemnity." P. 154.

Nothing! if we read our bible correctly, there is the same direction about prayer to the Lord of the harvest, for labourers in his harvest, coupled with the mission of the seventy, and of the twelve. With respect to his continuing in prayer the whole night previous to the choice of his apostles, is the Layman sure that their appointment was the special cause of our Lord's being thus employed? That he never prayed in this manner upon any other occasion? And particularly, before the election of the seventy? And supposing him to be sure of all this; how does it affect relative dignity? Christ prayed all night before appointing the twelve, and not before appointing the seventy, *therefore*, the twelve were a superiour order of ministers! It seems, then, that it was not preaching the gospel, nor performing mighty works in

his name, which lay so near the Saviour's heart when he was about to send forth his messengers, as to engage him all night in prayer; but it was the desire to set off a superiour order of them with suitable eclat!—When the *twelve* are to be commissioned, he prays all night. When the *seventy* are to be commissioned, he is not at the same trouble; and this merely to show that they are not of such high dignity as the others! Poor disciples! To have the same duties and the same trials with your twelve superiours, and much less interest in your master's affections and prayers! It was no small matter, we see, to be a bishop or something like one, in the days of his flesh: And if the Layman will undertake to prove that the succèssour-bishops have still the same enviable privilege, we shall not refuse him the praise of courage! However, if they act up to the *principle* of his argument, there is one inference which we think may be drawn from it with rather clearer evidence than his own for the pre-eminence of the apostles above the seventy; and that is, that when the hierarchy is about ordaining bishops, she prays most fervently; and when presbyters are to be ordained, she does not think it worth while to pray at all!

The Layman proceeds:

“The apostles were, likewise, superiour,” viz. to the seventy,  
“in *power*.” p. 154

How is this proved? Thus:



“ They alone received the commission to offer the eucharistic sacrifice of bread and wine.”

We stay not to comment on the popish style of this passage. “ Eucharistic *sacrifice* !” The scripture knows neither the name nor the thing, in reference to the *commemoration* of our Lord’s death in the sacrament of the supper. The Layman’s argument for the superiority of the twelve is, that they alone were authorized to administer this sacrament. Indeed ! How, then, came it to be administered by the Episcopal priests who are not the successors of the apostles ? Either this power does not prove superiority of rank, or else the hierarchy has transferred to an inferiour order, one of the peculiar functions of the superiour ; and thus corrupted the institutions of Christ. The Layman has his option. It will not be possible to evade the alternative ; because the Lord’s supper is an ordinance of perpetual obligation, and could not be administered by the apostles till after his death ; nor is there a shadow of proof that it was ever administered by them till after his ascension, and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Prove what it will, it cannot prove the superiority of the twelve above the seventy during his abode upon earth. And what is more, there is nothing in the institution of the supper to express the conveyance of authority to administer it. There is nothing but the appointment of it for the observation of the church. *This do in re*

*membrance of me; for as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* But all communicants "do this in remembrance of him," they all "show forth his death," in the holy supper, as much as did the apostles. The commission to administer the sacraments, and govern the church, was not given till the very moment of his departure from earth.

In the next place :

"To the twelve," says the Layman, "were twelve thrones appointed, whereon they should sit, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." P. 154.

As this language is altogether symbolical, he should have fixed his meaning before he quoted it as a proof. This he has not done, and it is not our business to do it for him. But Cyprian has conceded that Christ held, in his own hands, the supreme authority while he was on earth; the Layman himself has told us, that the twelve during this period, had not the power of ordination; and men who had power, neither to govern nor to ordain, are not very fitly depicted by the symbols of men "sitting upon thrones, and judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The Layman has again mistaken and misrepresented the passage, *part* of which he has cited. It stands thus, in Math. xix. 28. "Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, *when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory*, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones,

judging the twelve tribes of Israel." It appears from Luke, ch. xxii. that this promise was addressed to the twelve just before our Lord's passion. Whatever then is meant by the "twelve thrones," and the "judgment of the twelve tribes of Israel," it was not, and could not be possessed by the apostles, till after their master's *exaltation*: till he should sit in the *throne of his glory*. He was to bestow it upon them after he should have "ascended up far above all heavens," and not before. This is the text on which the Layman relies for proof of the pre-eminence of the twelve during our Lord's *humiliation*, when *he did not* sit in the throne of *his* glory, and consequently *they did not* sit on *their* thrones.

But "on them," viz. the twelve, "was to rest the fabric of the church. *The wall of the city having twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*" Rev. xxi. 14.

Another blunder, as usual. A symbolical representation of a state of the church which has not yet happened, is to prove that the twelve were superiour to the seventy in the days of their master's flesh, and before they had received any commission whatever to *govern*!

There is one argument more.

"Upon the happening of a vacancy, by the apostacy of Judas, Matthias was raised to his bishoprick, being numbered with the eleven apostles, and taking a part of their ministry. Acts i. Matthias had been one of the seventy. For this we have the testimony of Eusebius, of Jerome, of Epiphanius.

Mark, Luke, Sosthenes, with other evangelists, as also the seven deacons, were of the seventy, if the primitive fathers of the church be at all to be relied upon as witnesses of facts. And these persons, even after their promotion, were still inferior to the twelve, being under their government." P. 154.

The elevation of Matthias to the apostleship took place *after* the eleven had received their commission from the risen Saviour, and after he had ascended to heaven : and this is to prove that they were superior to the seventy *before* his passion. Truly the Layman has a right to make himself merry with the logic of his opponents ! But did the seventy retain, after Christ's resurrection, the commission which they had before his death, or did they not ? If they did not, the Layman's argument goes to the wall at once. If they did, then it is strange that their official character is never so much as mentioned, after the resurrection, in any part of the New Testament. And it is no less strange that the Layman should represent any of them as being *promoted* to the office of *deacons*. Lower they could not be, to be in the "priesthood" at all. And if they were *next* the apostles, as they were put in a preceding part of the discussion, their being made *deacons*, was a promotion *downwards*. They must have been, as belonging to the priesthood, either of the order of deacons, or of a superior order : if deacons, their ordination to that office by the apostles was a farce ; if of a superior order, it degraded them. The Layman has again his choice. But whether

they were *then* degraded, or promoted, or neither, what has this to do with their own office or that of the apostles, during our Lord's abode upon earth?

So much for the Layman's proofs that the twelve were superiour to the seventy. He has not proved, nor can he, with the whole phalanx of the hierarchy to help him, prove, either from their commission, or from their acts, that the twelve exercised or possessed an atom of power over the seventy.

But our difficulties are not yet ended. We encounter a formidable one in the fact, that the Christian church *was not organized at all during our Lord's residence on earth*. The ministry of the baptist, his own ministry, and that of the apostles and the seventy, were all *preparative*. The church could not be organized under the new dispensation, till the Jewish form ceased; and that could not cease till the Messiah had "finished transgression, made an end of sin, and made reconciliation for iniquity," by the sacrifice of himself. Accordingly, he gave his apostles their high commission after his resurrection; and they did not so much as attempt to act upon it, till, as he had promised, they were "endued with power from on high," by the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. *Then* they were able to speak in the name of a master who was "set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens." Then, and not till then, did the church put on her New Testament

form. It is, therefore, perfectly idle to infer what this form should be, from her appearance in her unformed state.

Once more. Had the Episcopal writers even made good their assertions concerning the state of the church in the period we have been reviewing, it would avail them nothing. Because our Lord has settled the platform of his church, the leading principles of her order, by positive statute; and this precludes, to the whole extent of the statute, all reasoning from analogy. We have nothing to do but to ascertain what he has enacted.

Thus have the proofs drawn in favour of the hierarchy, from the Jewish priesthood, and from the state of the church during our Lord's personal ministry, vanished, successively, at the touch.—Grosser abuse of the divine word than we have had occasion to expose, cannot easily be found. The Layman hardly approaches a text without disfiguring it. He is young, very young, in the study of his bible. This is *some* excuse; and, in his being a *layman*, he has an apology which cannot be extended to Cyprian, Vindex, or Cornelius. If reading the scriptures, like correct interpreters, were to be the test, we much fear that, in the issue of the present trial, neither himself, nor his reverend associates, would be entitled to plead *the benefit of clergy*.

Facts to justify the Episcopal claim, have been sought, without effect, in the constitution of the Jewish priesthood, and in that peculiar state of the church which existed during our Lord's personal ministry. These refuges have failed. The hierarchy has been dislodged from all her intrenchments in succession, and left without a resting place for the sole of her foot, in any part of the religious territory which was occupied by the church from the days of Abraham, till the day of Pentecost. We acknowledge, however, that she will suffer little detriment from her defeat, if she can establish herself firmly upon New Testament ground. The strength of her positions here, is next to be tried. If, as she glories, the *facts* of the New Testament are on her side, we own ourselves vanquished, and have nothing to do but to hand her our swords. But we shall not take her word for it. Let the facts be produced. According to the writers whom we are reviewing, they are found in the pre-eminence of James at Jerusalem; of Timothy at Ephesus; of Titus in Crete; and of the seven angels in the Asiatic churches. Epaphroditus, too, has been occasionally added to the number. The ability and *learning* of *Cyprian*, had done him up into a bishop, and had dispatched him from Philippi, in Episcopal majesty, on a visit to Paul at Rome. Unfortunately the good man lost his mitre by the way, so that when he arrived, the apostle could not distinguish him from a sim-

ple messenger, who came on an errand from his Philippian friends, and sent him back again *in statu quo*, without a single mark of prelatical dignity. So we leave him to go in quest of the others. Before investigating the validity of their individual titles, we ask the reader's attention to some *general presumptions* against the existence of prelates in the apostolic church. Presumptions, in our view, so strong, as almost to supersede the necessity of further examination.

The first is this, that *no such order is mentioned, nor even alluded to, either in the salutations of Paul's epistles to the churches, or in his directions for the performanee of relative duties.* Had prelacy been of apostolic origin; had Paul himself been distinguished for his zeal in establishing it, would there not have been *something* in his epistles to the churches, appropriated to their chief officer? He gives very exact instructions to every other class of Christians; points out, minutely, their duties to each other; carefully distinguishes between presbyters and deacons; draws their respective characters, and assigns their functions; salutes individual ministers and private Christians, both men and women, by name; but no where says one syllable to the superiour grade of ministers! How is this fact to be explained? That Paul, who observed the most scrupulous propriety in all his addresses—who left no part of religious society any excuse for neglect of duty—



who overlooked nothing which might tend to counsel, conciliate, or console—who carefully avoided every thing contemptuous or irritating—who was even solicitous, as we are told, to assert the dignity of prelates above that of presbyters—that this very Paul should take no manner of notice of them in his letters to their dioceses, should enjoin respect and obedience to their subalterns before their faces; and not so much as *hint* at the obedience which these subalterns owed to them, is past all belief! It would bespeak not a man of discretion; much less a wise man; less still, a great man; least of all an inspired apostle—but a downright idiot. He could not have fallen upon a more effectual method to disgrace them with their people; to encourage insubordination among their presbyters; and, by wantonly sporting with their feelings, to convert them into personal enemies. How then, we ask again, shall this omission be accounted for? It will not do to reply, that as the names of *bishop* and *presbyter* were promiscuously used, he joins them in common directions, salutation, and honour. This answer relieves not the difficulty: for it cannot extend to the deacons, whom he expressly distinguishes from the presbyters. Well, then, he singles out the *lowest* order of clergy, pays them marked attention, and, by this very act, *insults* the prelates whom his silence had sufficiently mortified. Further, if one set of particular instructions suits dif-

ferent sets of officers, how can their *functions* be different? If the prerogative of the prelate consist in the power of ordination and government, how can his duties be comprised in a draught of instructions for officers who have no such power? It would be as rational to insist that the very same instructions would suit the governour of a province and the constable of a town. And did not every rule of decorum require, on the part of the apostle, a primary attention to that order which was emphatically to succeed him? that order, without which, we are taught the Christian church can have neither form nor government, nor ministry, nor sacraments, nor lawful assemblies; no, nor even existence? That *this* order should first be instituted by the apostle, and then passed over in absolute neglect when he is writing to their churches; or be lumped with their inferiours, while the grades of these inferiours are addressed in a manner which it is impossible to mistake, puts all credulity at defiance. The question, therefore, returns, How shall we solve this enigma in the conduct of Paul? The simple solution is, he takes no separate notice of *bishops* as superiour to *presbyters*, because no such bishops existed. Other solution there is none. For it is very certain that *after* their introduction they figured gloriously. Whoever was left in the back ground, the bishop came conspicuously forward—whoever was thrown into the shade, the bishop was irradiated—who-

ever was treated with neglect, due homage to the bishop was never forgotten. Not such was the fact in the days of St. Paul; therefore, not such was the order which he had instituted.

2. Another presumption, if, indeed, it deserve not a higher name, against the episcopal construction of the New Testament facts, is, that one at least, of the two powers said to be vested exclusively in prelates, is clearly attributed to presbyters. We mean the power of *government*.

There are three terms employed in the New Testament to express the authority which is to be exercised in the Christian church, and they are *all* applied to presbyters. These terms are,

1. ἡγεσθαι—To take the lead.
2. προΐσθαι—To stand before—to preside.
3. ποιμαίνειν—To act the part, to fulfill the duties of a shepherd.

Every power which Christ hath deputed to his officers, is conveyed by one or other of these terms.

For the greater precision we shall show, *first*, that they do express the power of government; and *then*, that each of them is applied to presbyters.

1. ΗΓΕΟΜΑΙ. To take the lead—signifies to “rule.” *Math. ii. 6. Thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the PRINCES (ἡγεμόσιν) of Juda; for out of thee shall come a GOVERNOUR (ἡγούμενος) that shall RULE my people Israel.* The force

of the term, then, cannot be questioned. It is applied to presbyters.

*Heb. xii. 7. Remember them which HAVE THE RULE OVER YOU.* (τῶς ἡγούμενων ὑμῶν your rulers.) The apostle is speaking of their deceased pastors; for he immediately adds, *who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the END, the issue or termination, of their conversation.* Again,

*V. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you,* (τοῖς ἡγούμενοις ὑμῶν) *for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.*

That these “rulers” were presbyters, is evident from a single consideration; the apostle attributes the power of “ruling,” to those deceased pastors who had preached the gospel to the Hebrew converts; and those living ones who “watched for their souls;” which are undeniably the functions of presbyters; therefore Paul recognizes in presbyters, all the power of government expressed by the first term—rulers.

2. ΠΡΟΙΣΤΗΜΙ, or ΠΡΟΙΣΤΑΜΑΙ. To stand or place before—to preside—to rule. 1 Tim. iii. 4. *A Bishop must be one that RULETH WELL* (καλῶς προϊστάμενον) *his own house.* The same in v. 5. 12.\*

The power expressed by this term also, is applied to *Presbyters.*

1 Thess. v. 12. *We beseech you, brethren, to know*

\* For other references see *Raphelii Annot. Phil. in N. T. ad locum*, & *Schleusneri Novum Lexicon in N. T.*

them which labour among you, and ARE OVER YOU (*προισταμενους*) in the Lord.

It is a description of ordinary faithful pastors; not of *prelates*, for there were *several* at Thessalonica; and diocesan Episcopacy admits of but *one* in a city. The whole description taken together, supposes the exercise of functions, and an intimacy of intercourse, among the people, which a prelate cannot possibly observe in his diocese; but which is exactly characteristic of the *Presbyter*. However, to put the matter out of all doubt, Paul charges Timothy, 1 Eph. v. 17. *Let the elders that RULE WELL, (οἱ καλως προεστωτες) be accounted worthy of double honour, &c.*

*Presbyters* they are, Episcopacy herself being judge: for this is one of the passages which she quotes to prove their inferiority in the church of Ephesus, to bishop Timothy. The apostle, then, here formally attributes to presbyters the power of “ruling,” which we humbly conceive to be much the same with the power of “government.”

3. ΠΟΙΜΑΙΝΩ. To exercise the office of a shepherd; hence, to provide for the safety and comfort of any one—to direct, to controul, to govern.

This term being more comprehensive than either of the former two, we crave the reader's indulgence to a minuter proof of the last mentioned acceptation, viz. to “govern.”

As early as the days of *Homer*, this word and

its relatives were in familiar use, to designate not only authority, but the *highest* authority in the commonwealth. Thence that frequent Homeric phrase “the shepherd of the people,” for their “king.” No one who is in the least conversant with that pre-eminent poet will ask for examples; but lest we should be contradicted by such as are not, and yet wish to pass for “Greek scholars,” we subjoin a few; though at the hazard of being again reproved by Mr. *Hobart* for our “ostentation.”

————— Δρυαντα τε ΠΟΙΜΕΝΑ λαων.

Il. A. 263.

“Dryas the SHEPHERD of the people”—which the scholiast interprets by Βασιλεα οχλων; “the KING of multitudes.”

————— πειθοντο τε ΠΟΙΜΕΝΙ λαων

Σκηπτουχοι βασιλῆς.

Il. B. 85.

“The sceptred kings yielded to the SHEPHERD of the people.”—Where the scholiast again explains “shepherd” by “king.” Βασιλει.

In the same poet, “shepherd” is used interchangeably with other terms descriptive of the military chiefs of Greece.

Διαν διογενες, Τελαμωνιε, ΚΟΙΠΑΝΕ λαων.

Il. I. 640.

Οἱτινες ΗΓΕΜΟΝΕΣ Δαναων και ΚΟΙΠΑΝΟΙ ησαν. Il. B. 487.

Those who are elsewhere called “shepherds,” are here named “leaders” and “princes:” the former being interpreted “kings” by the scholiast, as he had already interpreted “shepherds.”

In the same way does he translate the latter, in his annotation upon v. 204, of the book last cited. So that by the great master of Grecian language and literature, the three terms, Ποιμην, Ηγεμων, Κοιρανος, i. e. "shepherd," "leader," "prince," are interchangeably used of the same rank, and are all explained by the Greek commentator, Βασιλευς, i. e. "king." Instances might easily be multiplied, but we forbear. We have the rather appealed to Homer, because he depicts that same state of society in which a great portion of the scriptures was written; and alludes to those same objects from which they have borrowed much of their imagery, and many of their terms.

Proceed we now to the septuagint version of the Old Testament, which was completed between two and three centuries before Christ. 2 *Kings*, v. 2. in our version, 2 *Sam.* v. 2. *The Lord said unto thee, viz. David, thou shalt FEED (ποιμανεις, shalt act as a shepherd to) my people Israel, and thou shalt be a CAPTAIN (ηγουμενον) over Israel.*

Precisely the same sort of example is to be found in Ch. vii. 7, 1 *Chron.* ii. 2. xvii. 6; also Ps. xlviii. 14. *Death shall FEED upon (ποιμανει, shall have the rule over) them.*

The New Testament is equally decisive. Math. ii. 6. *Thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a GOVERNOUR (ηγουμενος) that shall RULE*

(ποιμαίνει, feed, superintend as a shepherd,) *my people Israel*. The prophet speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the “good shepherd,” and the “chief shepherd;” and who had, and has, “the government upon his shoulder.” Is. ix. 6.

This term, likewise, is applied to Presbyters.

Acts xx. 17, 28. *From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus, and called the PRESBYTERS of the church and said unto them—Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you BISHOPS to FEED (ποιμαίνειν, like good shepherds, to provide for, watch over, and govern,) the church of God, &c.*

1 Pet. v. 2, 3. *The PRESBYTERS who are among you, I exhort, who am also a PRESBYTER. FEED (ποιμανατε) the flock of God which is among you, taking the OVERSIGHT (ἐπισκοπούντες, discharging the duty of BISHOPS) thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: Neither as being LORDS over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.*

It is obvious, upon the very face of the texts, that these *presbyters* of Ephesus, and of the dispersion, are considered as vested with the pastoral care in all its extent; and they are commanded to be faithful to the trust reposed in them, by providing for the protection, nurture, and comfort of the flock of God. This “feeding” the flock, this discharge of the pastoral duty, is directly opposed by Peter, to being “lords over God's heri-



tage," i. e. to rigorous and oppressive government; or, as we commonly say, to "lording it" over them. The contrast could have had no place, had not these presbyters been church governours; for it is idle to warn men against abusing a power which they do not possess. By instructing them *how* they were to govern the church, the Apostle has decided that the power of government was committed to them. No higher authority than he has recognized in them, can belong to the order of prelates. For the very same term by which he marks the power of the presbyters, is employed in scripture, to mark the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ himself.\*

The reader cannot for a moment, suppose that we put any power left in the church, on a level with that of her divine master. Far from us be the thought of such blasphemy. But we contend for these two things.

1st. That the term which both Paul and Peter apply to the office of presbyters, undoubtedly expresses the power of *government*; seeing it is the term which expresses the office of Christ, as the *governour* of his people Israel.

2d. That as this term, applied to the office of Christ, expresses the highest power of government in him as the chief shepherd; so, when applied to the office of the under shepherds, it expresses the highest power of government which he has dele-

\* Math. ii. 6—ἡγουμενος οστις ΠΟΙΜΑΝΕΙ τον λαον μου, &c.

gated to be exercised in his name for the welfare of his church. But this power is vested, Paul and Peter being judges, in *presbyters*; therefore, presbyters, by the appointment of Jesus Christ, are invested with the highest power of government known in his church.

We go further: The authority conveyed by the charge to “*feed the flock of God*,” comprehends the ordering of *all things* necessary to her well being; and, therefore, the power of *ordination* likewise. An essential part of the Redeemer’s *pastoral* office, was, and is, to provide under-pastors for his sheep. This, at first, he did in person, by immediate vocation. But having “*ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things*,” he performs the same office through the medium of the pastors whom he has left in the church. The question is to *what* pastors has he committed the trust of ordaining *other* pastors, and thus preserving the pastoral succession? We answer, to *presbyters*: for he has affixed to their office, that very term which designates his own right and care to furnish his church with pastors, or lawful ministers. Let our Episcopal brethren show as much for their prelates, if they can.

To sum up what has been said on this article: No expression more clear and decisive than those we have considered, are used in the scripture to denote either the communication, or the possession, or the exercise, of the ordinary powers given

by Christ for the well ordering of his church. And we have shown, that the New Testament has, in the most direct and ample manner, confided them *all* to presbyters.

Unless, therefore, we adopt the insane paradox of Hammond, viz. that the presbyters of the New Testament were all diocesan bishops, the passages quoted must bear one of two senses. Either they point out, under the denomination of presbyters, those officers who are strictly so called, in contradistinction from prelates and deacons; or they use the name with sufficient latitude to include the prelates too. If the former, our position is established. If the latter, then prelates and presbyters are *joined together* in the power of government, which the hierarchy maintains is confined to prelates alone. In either way, the argument is conclusive against her.

3d. At a very early period of the Christian church, presbyters did *actually exercise* the power of government: exercised it in conjunction with the apostles themselves; and that upon the principle of parity.

The important question concerning the obligation upon Christians to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, in order to salvation, was referred by the church at Antioch, to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. The historian does not mean apostles and elders who had a fixed and permanent charge at Jerusalem, which was essentially

incompatible with their apostolic vocation. But as that city had been the cradle of the Christian church, and was the centre of religious communication from all parts of the world, the apostles returned thither from their excursions in preaching the gospel, accompanied with Elders or Presbyters from the churches which they had planted, and met together in ecclesiastical council to consult about their common interest. Herein they have set us the example, and left us the warrant, of a *delegated body*, as the ultimate resort in all ecclesiastical affairs: for, such a body, to all intents and purposes, was the assemblage of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. Of this most venerable primitive Synod, we treat no further at present than to ascertain what share the *presbyters* had in its proceedings. The following things appear indisputable.

1st. The apostles and presbyters met in common; that is, they formed but *one* assembly. Of a “house of bishops,” and a “house of clerical and lay delegates,” they had no idea. This improvement in church-government was reserved for discovery by those who have been trained in the school of the “judicious”\* *Hooker*.

\* This appellation was bestowed upon Hooker by James VI. who was delighted, beyond measure, with his famous work on *ecclesiastical polity*. And delighted with it for the same reason which, no doubt, ravished the heart of Cardinal *Allen*, and Pope

2d. The *right* of the presbyters to sit in judgment with the apostles upon all ecclesiastical concerns, which were not to be decided by special revelation, was well understood in the churches.

The proof of this proposition lies in the *very terms* of the reference from Antioch. For it is inconceivable, how the church there should think of submitting a question, so weighty in itself, and so extensive in its consequences, to the “elders,” conjointly with the “apostles,” if they had not been taught that presbyters were the ordinary church governours, and were to continue such after the decease of the others. This explains why they went up with the apostles to Jerusalem. It was not only to give them opportunities of information; but also, if not chiefly, to learn the proper mode of dispatching the public business. Before this council or synod, composed of apostles and elders, was the interesting reference from Antioch laid; by them was it discussed, and by them decided.

3d. The apostles, on this occasion, acted simply as members of the synod; they did nothing in vir-

*Clement the VIII.\* viz.* that the *principle* of *Hooker's* book, and the scope of his argument, are to prove the right of the church to model her government as she shall judge for edification. We shall touch this subject again. Does not the reader suppose that this must be a truly *Protestant* work, which excited the admiration and rapture of the pope and his cardinals!

\* *Hooker's* life, p. 78, 79. Works, vol. 1. 8vo.

tue of their extraordinary, which was their apostolical, character, nor introduced into the deliberations of the assembly, any influence but that of *facts* ; of the *written scripture* ; and of *reasoning* founded on the comparison of both. All this is evident from the narrative in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts ; and resulted from the nature of the case. Had the question been to be determined by *special revelation* or *apostolic* authority, *one* inspired man, or *one* apostle, would have answered as well as a dozen. The dispute might have been settled on the spot, and by Paul himself. Had there arisen any doubt of his power, or distrust of his integrity, a hundred miracles, if necessary, would instantly have removed the obstacle. In every view, the embassy to Jerusalem would have been an useless parade.

The truth is, that the apostles acted in a *double* capacity. They had that authority which was designed to be ordinary and perpetual, such as preaching the word, administering the sacraments, and governing the church. But superadded to this, they had also the authority of special messengers for extraordinary and temporary purposes. If a new church was to be founded among the nations—if any part of the rule of faith was to be revealed—if a particular emergency required a particular interposition ; in these and similar cases, their extraordinary character found its proper objects : they “ spake as they were moved

by the Holy Ghost :” their judgment was infallible, and their authority paramount. But for the *ordinary* government of the church, or any part of it, they do not appear to have enjoyed these extraordinary communications of the divine spirit ; nor to have exerted their extraordinary powers ; nor to have claimed a particle of authority above the presbyters. Without such a distinction as we have now stated, their history is a tissue of inconsistencies, and their conduct in the synod of Jerusalem must be given up as a riddle that baffles solution.

Seeing, therefore, that in the apostolic epistles and salutations to the churches, there is no mention of prelates, although there is frequent mention of presbyters and deacons—that presbyters are formally addressed as possessing the power of government—and that they actually did exercise it in matters of the highest moment, the advocate for diocesan episcopacy must adduce *scriptural facts* to support him under the depressing weight of all these considerations. As he maintains that prelates are at least of apostolic origin ; and that they *alone* succeeded the apostles in the powers of ordination and government, his *facts* must not only be *plausible* when detached from their place and bearings in the Christian history, and when decorated with appendages of his own imagination ; but they must accord with the *language* of the New Testament, and with its *narrative* ; they

must be so *decisive* as to annihilate the foregoing difficulties ; and must not admit of a fair and rational explanation upon Presbyterian principles. With such facts, he tells us, he is ready to confront us. Our curiosity is awake : let us look at them without further delay.

He refers us for one fact, to that same synod of Jerusalem which we have just left. We must go back again.

“ If from Crete,” says Cyprian, “ we pass to Jerusalem, we shall there discover equally striking evidence\* that St. James, the brother of our Lord, possessed in that place the pre-eminence of a bishop in the church. In the first council that was held there, in order to determine the controversy which had arisen in regard to the circumcision of Gentile converts, we find him pronouncing an authoritative sentence. His sentence, we remark also, determined the controversy. “ Wherefore my sentence is, says he, that we trouble not those who from among the Gentiles are turned unto God.” In Acts xxi. 17 and 18, we are told, “ that when St. Paul and his company were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received him gladly ; and that the next day following, Paul went in with them unto James, and all the Elders or Presbyters were present.” Acts xii. 17, it is said, that “ Peter, after he had declared to the Christians to whom he went, his miraculous deliverance, bade them go and

\* What this “ striking evidence” is, remains to be seen hereafter. We shall reduce the out-works of the hierarchy before we close in upon her citadel. This is the Episcopal character of Timothy and Titus, as her chieftains confess, as their anxiety to defend it sufficiently indicates, even without their confession. In the mean time, we believe Cyprian to be pretty correct in making the evidence for the episcopate of James at Jerusalem, to be “ *equally* striking” with that of Titus’s at Crete. For we hope to prove that in both cases it amounts to just nothing at all !



show these things to James and to the brethren." In Galatians ii. 12, St. Paul says, "that certain came from James," that is, from the church of Jerusalem to the church of Antioch. Surely these passages strongly indicate that James held the highest dignity in the church of Jerusalem. The brethren carry Paul and his company to him as to a supreme officer. He has presbyters and deacons in subordination to him. When messengers are sent from Jerusalem to other churches, it is not done in the name of the presbyters and deacons, or of the church of this place ; it is done in the name of James. Do not these considerations prove James was the supreme ruler of that church ?"

The first argument of Cyprian for the episcopal pre-eminence of James, is, that he pronounced in the synod of Jerusalem, "*an authoritative sentence ;*" and that "*his sentence determined the controversy.*" The proof is, that expression in his speech to the council, "Wherefore, *my sentence* is, that we trouble not those who from among the Gentiles are turned unto God." *Acts* xv. 19.

We are under the necessity of objecting, for the *third* time, to these writers, that they put into the mouth of the person whom they quote, declarations which he never uttered. They will make James deliver an authoritative sentence as the bishop of Jerusalem. They, perhaps, could not help themselves, as they have only followed their file leaders. *Potter* had said the same thing ; and they took it as they found it. But the editor of *Lycophron*, and author of the "*Antiquities of Greece*," was "a scholar, and a ripe and good one." He knew that he was standing on slippery

ground; and so to save his own reputation, he slyly fathers his construction of James's words upon old *Hesychius*.\*

But in opposition to Cyprian, and the Layman, and archbishop Potter, and Hesychius too, we shall show,

1. That there is nothing in the language of James, from which it can be inferred that he, as the superiour officer, pronounced an *authoritative sentence*, and,

2. That it was *impossible* for him to pronounce such a sentence.

The *first* point is to be settled by a critical examination of his phraseology. His words are, *Αὐτὸ ἐγὼ ΚΡΙΝΩ*, which our translators have rendered “*Wherefore MY SENTENCE is.*”

The primitive meaning of the word is to *discriminate*, to *separate*, to *select*, to *arrange*. Thus Homer,

—Δημητῆρ

ΚΡΙΝΕΙ, ἐπειγομένων ἀνέμων ΚΑΡΙΟΝ τε καὶ ΑΧΝΑΣ.

II. E. 501.

“*Separates*, by the winds, the *chaff* from the *wheat*.”

\* *Discourse on Church Government*, p. 91. In a note, the learned prelate cites Hesychius as thus distinguishing—“Peter addresses the council; but James enacts the law.” Πέτρος δημηγορεῖ, ἀλλ’ Ἰακώβος νομοθετεῖ. Potter’s precaution passed unobserved. The reason probably is, that it was locked up in the quotation from Hesychius, “*Græcum est; et non potest legi!*” said the *Trojans* of Oxford, whenever a line of Greek came in their way.

—————ΚΡΙΝΑΣ τ'ανα δημον αριστους.

Od. Δ. 666.

“*Selecting* the most valiant throughout the people.”

ΚΡΙΝ' ανδρας κατα φυλα.

Il. B. 362.

“*Arrange* the men according to their nations.”

From this primitive notion, the word, by a very natural transition, came to signify the formation of an opinion, or judgment, and the expression of it when formed, because no opinion or judgment can exist without a previous process by which the mind *discriminates* between its own perceptions. And thus the word is familiarly used by writers both profane and sacred.

—————μισει δε πλεον η δικη ΚΡΙΝΑΝΤΕΣ.

“*Forming their opinion* rather from hatred than justice,” says Thucydides of the Platæans, with respect to their *judgment* of the Thebans.\*

—την διακοσμησιν και ταξιν ΚΡΙΝΕΙΝ ου τυχης—ειναι κασκευασματα

“To *think* that the beautiful order of the universe is not the production of fortune.”†

—————τω τουτο ΚΡΙΝΕΙΣ.

“Why dost thou *think* so? upon what ground art thou of *this opinion*?”‡

In the speech of Hermocrates to the Syracusans,

\* *Thucyd.* III. 67. p. 209. *ed Dukeri.*

† *Diod. Sic. Lib. xii. 84. Tom. I. p. 491. ed Wessel.*

‡ *Aristoph. Plut v. 48. p. 9. ed Kusteri.*

as recorded by Thucydides, there is a perfect parallel to the expression of James.

“We shall consult,” says he, “if we be in our right minds, not only our own immediate interests; but whether we shall be able still to preserve all Sicily, against which, *in my judgment*, the Athenians are plotting.”\*

The same use of the word is so common in the New Testament, that examples are almost superfluous. We shall, however, subjoin a few, because they will bring our criticism more directly within the reach of the unlearned reader.

*Luke vii. 43. Simon said—I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged (ορθως ΕΚΡΙΝΑΣ.)* Simon’s judgment was surely not an *official* one. It was simply his *opinion*, or *conclusion*, from the case proposed to him.

*John vii. 24. JUDGE not (Μη ΚΡΙΝΕΤΕ) according to the appearance, but JUDGE righteous JUDGMENT (ΚΡΙΣΙΝ ΚΡΙΝΑΤΕ.)* No “authoritative sentence” is contemplated here.

*Acts xii. 46. Seeing—ye JUDGE yourselves (ΚΡΙΝΕΤΕ) unworthy, &c.*

*2 Cor. v. 14, 15. The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus JUDGE (ΚΡΙΝΑΝΤΑΣ τουτο,) &c. “Concerning the love of Christ,” saith Paul,*

\* —ου περι των ιδιων μονου, ει σωφρονωμεν, η συναδος εσται’ αλλ’ ει επιβουλευομενην την πασαν Σικελιαν, ΩΣ ΕΓΩ ΚΡΙΝΩ, υπ’ Αθηναιων, δυνησομεθα ετι διασωσαι. *Thucyd. iv. 60. p. 272. ed Dukeri.*

“ this is our *sentiment*, our *mode of reasoning*, that if one died for all,” &c.

In every one of the preceding quotations, the very same word is used which occurs in the speech of James, and, in the very same sense. It is the plainest Greek imaginable to express the *result of one's reflections*. This is all that the words of James imply. He spoke among the last ; he availed himself of the discussion which had already taken place : And when his opinion was matured, he submitted it to the council in the form of a temperate and conciliatory proposition. We ask any man of plain sense, to look over the chapter, and say whether this is not a natural and satisfactory account of the whole affair. Little did the guileless disciple suspect that his familiar and innocent expression, would be converted, in these latter days, into a certificate of his being a diocesan bishop ! And had not the “ proofs ” of the hierarchy been, like lords' wits, rather “ thinly sown,” she would never have attempted to cull one from a form of speech which might have been adopted by the obscurest member of the council, with as much propriety as by James himself.

We have neither interest nor disposition to conceal what is well known to even smatterers in Greek, that the term which we have shown to be familiarly used to signify the expression of *opinion generally*, is also used, and with equal familiarity, in a more *restricted* sense, of a *judicial* opinion ; or,

if you prefer it, an “authoritative sentence.” But then it always *presupposes the judicial or authoritative character* of the person to whom it is applied. Thus the senses of the word rank.

1. To discriminate—to select—to arrange.—Thence,

2. To form a judgment—to express an opinion,—and thence,

3. To pronounce an official judgment; or “an authoritative sentence.”

But who does not see that you must first know under *what circumstances* a person is represented as speaking or acting, before you can determine whether the writer intends, by the word we are considering, a mere *selection* of one thing from a number of others? or an *opinion* as expressed in conversation or debate? or a *solemn judicial sentence*? Had the prelatie dignity of James been *first established*; and had the synod at Jerusalem been a *convocation of his clergy*, there would have been a propriety in attributing to him an “authoritative” decision, and interpreting his words accordingly. But to argue from his “my sentence is,” that he *was* a prelate, is completely begging the question. The argument *assumes* that he was the bishop of Jerusalem; for this is indispensable to that “authority” which Cyprian ascribes to his words; and it is exactly taking for granted, the thing to be proved.

Another unfortunate circumstance for the Epis-

copal construction of James's speech is, that it contradicts the sacred historian. In the very next chapter he tells us, that Paul and Silas delivered to the cities through which they passed, "the decrees for to keep, that were *ordained* (*KEKPI-MENA*) of the *apostles and elders*." Ch. xvi. 4. *Cyprian* says that *James* pronounced the "authoritative sentence." The inspired historian says, that it was pronounced by the *apostles and elders*. Both cannot be true; and we are inclined to think that the rector of the episcopal church in Albany, cannot stand in the judgment, even with Potter and Hesychius to back him. The affront put upon the narrative of Luke is the more conspicuous, as the term which, in the mouth of James, is tortured into an "authoritative sentence," *here* occurs in that sense most unequivocally: because the reference from Antioch was brought before the *tribunal* of the apostles and elders. They were recognized as *Judges having cognizance of the question*; and theirs was, of course, an authoritative sentence. James was, indeed, *one* of the judges; he acted in his judicial character, but that character was common to him with every other member of the council; and like theirs, his only influence was that of his wisdom and his vote. The scripture, then, being judge, it is incontestible, that he did NOT pronounce an "authoritative sentence."

Our *second* position is, that it was *impossible* for

James to exercise such a power as the advocates of Episcopacy attribute to him. Our proofs are these :

1. The cause was not referred to him ; and accordingly it was not tried in the court of “ St. James ;” but in the court of the “ apostles and elders,” as the representatives of the Christian church.

2. It could not be referred to him ; nor could he, as bishop of Jerusalem, have any cognizance of it ; Antioch being entirely without his jurisdiction.

3. The decision of the council was received and obeyed with alacrity through the churches of Asia. But had it been pronounced by an authority so limited and local as that of the bishop of Jerusalem, the effect must have been very different. Unless we should suppose, that all the Asiatic cities through which Paul and Silas passed, were subject to the see of Jerusalem ; and, then, we shall not only spoil the Episcopal argument from the seven angels of Asia ; but shall overturn the whole system of the hierarchy, as it is pretended to have been established by apostolic ordination : because we shall admit, that, instead of fixing bishops at proper distances for governing the church within convenient dioceses, the apostles put the immense regions of Asia under a spiritual head in the land of Judea. Indeed, we have always thought it hard, upon the Episcopal



plan, that, considering the importance and the wealth of Antioch, not a bishop could be mustered for that distinguished city ; but she must go for direction all the way to the prelate of Jerusalem !

4. The assembly in which James delivered his speech was not composed of clergy belonging to his diocese ; and, therefore, he could not, even upon episcopal principles, pronounce an “ authoritative sentence.” The reason is obvious : he could not exercise authority over those who were not under his controul. There were present at the council, not only “ presbyters,” but “ apostles.” Peter was there, Paul was there, and how many others, we do not know. Had James then pronounced an “ authoritative sentence,” he had been above not only all the presbyters of his own diocese, but above all the deputies from Antioch ; above all the members of the council from whatever part of the world ; above the apostles themselves ! Look, then, at this *fact* of the hierarchy. It turns the very apostles into mere make-weights of bishop James ! It sets up an authority much like that of a visible head of the church catholic, than the papists have ever been able to produce for their “ St. Peter !” If this is *not* a “ bold stroke ” for a bishop, pray, gentlemen, what *is* ? And if any of our readers can digest such a dish of absurdity, we wish him much comfort of his meal !

We shall not trespass long upon the patience of

either our friends or our foes, in disposing of the “remains” of Cyprian’s proofs. “When St. Paul and his company were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received him gladly, and the next day following, Paul went in with them unto James, and all the elders or presbyters were present.” It was rather rustic in Paul not to pay his court to the bishop *first*. We have learnt, at the expense of some mortification, that in New-York any communication with the clergy, on ecclesiastical matters, except through the medium of the bishop, is an invasion of episcopal order. But Paul must be pardoned for committing an oversight, especially as Cyprian, to be even with him, has done so too. He has stopped at that part of the narrative, which, in his eyes, holds James forth in something of bishop-like majesty, and forgot to tell the rest of the story. The reader, no doubt, would expect to hear of a very pointed conference between James and the apostle, all the presbyters listening with due humility to their superiours ; but if he turn to the history, (Acts xxi.) he will find these same presbyters most uncivilly advising the apostle ; and what is still worse, telling him that *they* had decided the reference from Antioch. Cyprian asserts that *James* made the decision. They, on the contrary, have the assurance to tell the apostle Paul, in the pre-

sence of James himself, that the *presbyters* had decided it. And all this while not a word of bishop James ! In the following ages the presbyters were taught better manners.

But then, it seems, that after Peter's "miraculous deliverance," he bade the Christians go and show these things to James, and to the brethren"—Also, that "certain came from *James*, that is, from the church of Jerusalem to the church of Antioch." *Therefore*, James was bishop of Jerusalem ! Very sagely and conclusively reasoned ! As if such things did not happen every day in places where there are ministers of the gospel distinguished by their talent or standing. The writer of this review stepped the other evening into the house of that venerable Christian veteran, the Reverend Dr. Rodgers, and found there "certain brethren" who had just come from one of their judicatories. It is quite common for people to talk of Dr. Rodgers' sending ministers to preach ; and even to designate his denomination as Dr. Rodgers' church ! Therefore Dr. Rodgers is bishop of New-York ; and primate of the Presbyterian church in North-America !!

"Thus endeth the first lesson," which is concerning Cyprian's "striking evidence" that James was bishop of Jerusalem.

Having disposed of the see of Jerusalem, which had been gratuitously conferred on James, we proceed to the argument in favour of Diocesan Episcopacy, from the epistles addressed, in the book of the Revelation, to the seven churches of Asia. We give it in the words of Cyprian. And as it may possibly amuse the reader, while it convinces him that we were correct in saying that Archbishop Potter is one of the *real* authors under the signatures of *Cyprian*, &c. we shall put his Grace of Canterbury side by side with our Albany friend.

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“ St. John, in the three first chapters of his Revelation, has given us a lively description of seven *bishops* who presided in the seven principal cities of the pro-consular Asia. Our Lord is there introduced, sending seven epistles to the seven churches of these cities, directed to the *seven angels* of the churches, whom he calls *the seven stars in his right hand*. Now if it appears that the *seven angels*

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“ In the three first chapters of the Revelations of St. John, we find absolute demonstration of the existence of the Episcopal dignity and authority, at the time in which this work was written. In these chapters, St. John gives us a description of the seven Bishops, who superintended the interests of the church in the seven principal cities in the Pro-Consular Asia. Our Lord is represented as sending seven Epistles to the seven churches of these cities, directed to the seven angels of the churches, whom he calls the “ seven stars in his right hand.” From all the circum-

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were so many single persons invested with supreme authority in the seven churches, there can be no reason to doubt, whether they were the *bishops* of these churches ; a *bishop* being nothing else but *one* who has chief authority in the church.

“ Let us examine in the *first* place, whether the *seven angels* were so many single persons ? And first of all, it is manifest they were not the whole church or collective body of Christians in their several cities ; because the churches are represented by *seven candlesticks*, which are all along distinguished from the *seven stars*, which are emblems of the *angels*. Neither were they any select number or body of men : For they are constantly mentioned as single persons ; *the angel of the church of Ephesus*, *the angel of the church of Smyrna*, and so the rest.”

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“ Accordingly, both he and all the rest are constantly addressed to in the singular number ; *I know thy works*, *I have a few things against thee*, *remember how thou hast*

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stances that are mentioned, it undeniably appears that these seven angels were so *many single persons*, invested with supreme authority in the churches ; that is to say, they were the bishops of those churches.

“ I say it manifestly appears, that these seven angels of the churches, whom the Lord calls the “seven stars” in his right hand, were single persons. They were not the whole church or collective body of Christians. This is proved incontestably from these considerations. The whole Churches, or collective body of Christians, are represented by “seven candlesticks,” which are distinguished from the “seven stars,” that are emblems of the Angels, the Bishops. They are constantly mentioned in the *singular number*. “The Angel of the Church of Ephesus”—“the Angel of the Church of Smyrna,” and so of the rest.

And in the epistle to Thyatira it is said, “I know thy works.” “I have a few things against thee.” “Remember how thou hast heard.” “Thou hast kept the word of my pa-

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heard, thou hast kept the word of my patience, and so in the rest, where our Lord speaks to them in particular : But when what he writes equally concerns the people, he changes his style, and speaks in the plural : *The devil shall cast some of you into prison. Thou hast not denied my faith when Antipas my faithful martyr was slain among you. I will reward every one of you according to your works. That which ye have, hold fast till I come.* Which variation of the number, is a plain argument that some parts of these Epistles relate to the whole churches, and others only to the persons of the *angels*."

"But there is one thing yet behind, which will put this matter beyond dispute : namely, that the titles of *angels* and *stars* are constantly applied in this book of Revelation to single men : Our Lord is called the *Morning Star*, and the *Sun*, and the apostles are called *twelve stars*, and *twelve angels* ; but there is not one example where these titles are given to any *society* or *number* of men. So that if we will allow the divine author of this book to speak in this place, as he does in all others, the *angels*

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tience." This is the style which is used when the Angel or Bishop of the Church is addressed.—

But when what is said relates to the *people*, the style is altered, the *plural number* is then used. "The devil shall cast some of you into prison."

"I will reward every one of you according to your works. That which ye have, hold fast till I come." And this variation in the number, proves that *some parts of these Epistles relate to the whole Church, and others only to the Angels.*

But what places this subject beyond all reasonable doubt is this circumstance : The titles of Angels and stars are *constantly applied* in the book of Revelation to single men, and *never* to a society or number of men. Our Lord is called the "morning star and the sun," and the twelve Apostles are called "twelve stars," and "twelve Angels."

It is evident, therefore, that the seven stars or Angels in the book of Revelation, are single persons.

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of the seven churches can be none but single persons.

“The *next* thing to be made out is, that these single persons were men of chief authority in their several churches. And we might safely conclude they were so, though we had no other proof of it, because our Lord has directed to them the Epistles, which he designed for the use of their churches. But there are several other arguments, which prove that the *angels* were men of eminent station and authority: For whereas the churches are only called *candlesticks*, the *angels* are resembled to *stars*, which give light to the *candlesticks*.”

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“They are praised for all the good, and blamed for all the evil which happened in their churches. The *angel* of Ephesus is commended, because he *could not bear them that were evil*, and had *tried those who called themselves Apostles, and were not so*; which seems to imply, that he had judicially convicted them to be impostors. And the *angel* of Pergamos is reproved *for having them who hold the doctrine of Balaam*; that is, the Nicolaitans, who allowed themselves to

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That these persons possessed supreme authority in the Churches, is also demonstrated from these considerations.

These Epistles are addressed to them alone.

The Churches are called candlesticks, and they the stars which give *light* to the candlesticks.

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The seven angels are praised for all the good which they had done, and blamed for all the evil which happened in the Churches. The Angel of Ephesus is commended because “he could not bear them that were evil, and had tried those who called themselves Apostles, and were not so,” which seems to imply that he had convicted them of imposture. The Angel of Pergamos is reproved for having them “who hold the doctrine of Balaam, and he is severely

POTTER.

*commit fornication, and to cat things sacrificed to idols ; and he is severely threatened, unless he repented : which shows he had authority to correct these disorders, otherwise he could not justly have been punished for them. The same may be said of the angel of Thyatira, who is blamed for suffering Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce the people. And the angel of Sardis is commanded to be watchful, and to strengthen those who are ready to die ; otherwise our Lord threatens to come on him, as a thief, at an hour which he should not know."*

CYPRIAN.

threatened unless he repented." This shows that he possessed authority to correct these disorders, or he could not justly be menaced with punishment for permitting them. The Angel of Thyatira also is blamed for suffering "Jezebel," who called herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce the people. And the Angel of Sardis is commanded "to be watchful, and to strengthen those who are ready to die," otherwise our Lord threatens to come on him "as a thief ; at an hour which he should not know."

The writers under review, having a great contempt for all reasoning from *names*, promised to intrench themselves within scriptural *facts*. One of their facts they find in the history of the "stars" or "angels" of the seven churches. Yet if the reader shall attentively inspect their argument, which we have placed before him in its full strength, he will perceive that it rests entirely upon their interpretation of two *names*. These are "angel" and "star:" which, in the symbolical language of the scripture, are as really names of office, as bishop, presbyter, deacon, are in its alphabetical or common language. The aspect of



the fact changes with the construction of these two symbols. You must fix their sense before you can tell what the fact is. Unless you can prove that "star" and "angel" necessarily denote individuals, and such individuals as diocesan bishops, the fact, instead of being *for* the hierarchy, will be *against* her. And thus her advocates, under the pretext of "absolute demonstration," put us off with what they themselves have again and again declared to be "miserable sophistry"—"the old and wretched sophistry of names."

Let us, however, examine this, their "absolute demonstration" of diocesan Episcopacy. It turns, as we just now said, upon the interpretation of the symbolical titles, "angel" and "star." These, our prelatical friends maintain, "*are constantly applied in the book of Revelation to single men, and never to a society or number of men.*" Such is the assertion—now for the proof.

"The whole churches, or collective bodies of Christians, are represented by "seven candlesticks," which are distinguished from the "seven stars," that are emblems of the angels, the bishops."

The distinction is admitted : but it is equally marked upon the Presbyterian plan. For the collective body of the ministry is quite as distinguishable from their churches, as the bishops alone can be. Nothing is gained here. We go on.

"They," the angels, "*are constantly mentioned in the singular number.*"

What then? Does this prove that the singular term “angel” has never a *collective* sense?

What next? Nothing at all. Let our readers examine, again, the whole of what Cyprian has said upon this point, and if they can detect, in the multitude of his words, and his show of illustration, any thing more than his mere assertion, we shall be disappointed.

The stars and angels, says he, are distinguished from the churches. True—but they may be so without being diocesan bishops——

“They are constantly mentioned in the singular number”—which is not true. And if it were, the question still is, whether the symbolical term in the singular number must necessarily signify only a single person—O yes, says Cyprian, most undoubtedly. “What places this subject beyond all reasonable doubt, is this circumstance. The titles of angels and stars are constantly applied in the book of Revelation, to single men, and never to a society or number of men!” Now this is exactly the thing to be proved.

*Amphora cœpit  
Institutui: currente rota cur urceus exit?*

Cyprian sets out with a threat of “absolute demonstration,” and leaves off with begging the question.\*

\* Potter, in his zeal to make out the prelatie character of these angels, presses into his service a *various reading*. “If,” says he,

That the assertions which Cyprian has borrowed from Potter, are not accompanied with *quite* an "absolute demonstration," may be gathered from the light in which they are considered by Episcopal writers no way inferior to Potter himself.

"Methinks," says Dr. *Henry More*, "it is extremely harsh to conceit that these seven stars are merely the seven bishops of any particular churches of *Asia*, as if the rest were not supported nor guided by the hand of Christ ; or as if there were but seven in his *right hand*, but all the rest in his *left*. Such high representations

"in the epistle to *Thyatira*, instead of (την γυναίκα Ἰεζεβελ,) the *woman* Jezebel, we read (την γυναίκα σου Ἰεζεβελ,) *thy wife* Jezebel, as it is in *St. Cyprian*, the *Syriac* version, the *Alexandrian*, and several other manuscript copies, then the *Angel* of *Thyatira* was a married man, and consequently but *one* person."\*

Learning, when not well directed, falls into absurdities which plain sense avoids. It is hard for a man to suspect himself of blundering when he is displaying his erudition. But on this occasion, the eyes of Potter seem to have been blinded by the dust of his manuscripts. If we adopt his reading, and make "Jezebel" a literal woman, by making her the wife of the prelate of *Thyatira*, the symbolical or figurative sense of the text is gone. And in order to be consistent, the crimes charged upon her must also be literal. Thus we shall not only have my lady of *Thyatira* an open adulteress ; but the diocese a huge brothel under her inspection ; where by example and by precept, she initiates her husband's flock in the mysteries of lewdness and idolatry. A goodly occupation for the spouse of a diocesan ! Bad times, one would think, for an angel-bishop ; and not the most flattering compliment to episcopal discipline.

\* *Discourse of Church government*, p. 145, 3d edit.

cannot be appropriated to ANY SEVEN PARTICULAR CHURCHES WHATSOEVER." Again, "By *angels*, according to the *apocalyptick* style, all the agents under their presidency are represented or insinuated—and it is so frequent and obvious in the *Apocalypse*, that none that is versed therein can any ways doubt of it."\*

The great, and justly celebrated *Joseph Mede*, observes, that "Angels, by a mode of speaking not uncommon in this book, are put for the *nations* over which they were thought to preside. Which appears hence, that they who, by the injunction of the oracle, are *loosed*, are *armies of cavalry* sent forth to slaughter men."†

Just after he adds, "the *four angels*, (Rev. ix. 14,) "signify so many *Sultanies* or kingdoms."‡

Dr. *Fulk*, in his answer to the Rhemish Testament, remarks, that "St. John, by the angels of the churches, meaneth not *all that should wear on their heads mitres*, and hold crosier-staves in their hands, like dead idols, but them that are faithful messengers of God's word, and utter and declare the same. They are called the

\* *Exposition of the seven churches, Works, p. 724.*

† *Angeli ponuntur pro gentibus quibus præesse credebantur, non inusitatâ in hoc libro metouymia. Id ex eo apparet, quòd qui continuò ex oraculi præscripto solvuntur, Exercitus Equestres suut, hominibus occideudis emissi. In Apocap. B. III. Tub. VI. Works, p. 471.*

‡ *Angeli quatuor totidem Sultanias seu regna significant. Ibid.*

*Angels of the churches* because they are *God's messengers*.”\*

The famous *Stillingfleet*, in his *Irenicum*, asks, concerning these angels, “If, in the prophetick style, any unity may be set down by way of representation of a multitude ; what evidence can be brought from the *name*, that by it some one particular person must be understood ?”—And a little further he says, “If many things in the Epistles be direct to the angels, but yet so as to concern the whole body, then of necessity, the angel must be taken as a *representative* of the whole body, and then, why may not the word *angel* be taken by way of representation of the body itself ; either of the whole church, or, which is far more probable, of the *Consensus*, or order of Presbyters in that church ? We see what miserable, unaccountable arguments those are, which are brought for any kind of government, from metaphorical or ambiguous expressions or names promiscuously used.”†

\* This and the following quotation, are from the Appendix to Ayton's Original Constitution of the Christian Church.

† It is the fashion with the *Jure divino* prelatists to decry this work of Stillingfleet as the production of his juvenile days ; and as being recanted by him in maturer life. The true reason of their dislike to it is, that it has sorely gravelled them from the date of its publication till the present hour, and is likely to gravel them in all time hereafter. We cannot, however, see what the age or the *recantation* of the author, (if he *did* recant,) has to do with the question, any further than as it may be influenced by his

We quote these passages, not to make them our own, but to show that Episcopal writers of the highest reputation, entertain opinions very different from those of Potter and Cyprian, as to the evidence which the apocalyptic angels give in favour of their hierarchy :

“ It is absolute demonstration,” says Cyprian.

“ It is a harsh conceit,” says Dr. *H. More*.

“ The titles of angels and stars are *never* applied,” says Cyprian after Potter, “ to a society or number of men.” They signify “ them that

private opinion. “ Old men are not always wise ;” nor do green years detract from the force of argument. Facts and reasonings having no dependence upon a writer’s *name*, stand or fall in their own strength. It is one thing to *recant*, and quite another to *refute*. The learned, but unhappy Whitby, who, in his commentary on the New Testament, had zealously defended the divinity and atonement of our Lord and Saviour, left a work behind him entitled *Ὑστεραι φροντιδες*, or *After Thoughts*, in which he denied both. Yet his proofs of his previous belief remain unanswered by himself, and unanswerable by any other man. We see that it is very possible for great and learned men to echange for the *worse*. Therefore, although Stillingfleet, whether of his own accord, or by yielding to the teazings and menaces of others, did retract the doctrines of his *Irenicum*, it does not follow that all his facts and reasonings are false, or that he himself drew nearer to the truth. He renounced the *Irenicum*, the prelatists cry—Good. Did he *answer* it ? we ask. Howbeit, since Dr. Hobart has represented himself and his brother-writers, as young men, and even “ striplings ;” who knows, but, upon their arriving at maturity, when they shall have sown their intellectual “ wild oats,” their opinion may echange in a direetion eontrary to that of the bishop of Worcester, and that they may yet ripen into excellent Presbyterians ?

are the faithful messengers of God's word ;" answers Dr. *Fulk*—They " are put for the *nations* over which they were thought to preside," adds the venerable *Mede*—*More* follows again, with a declaration, " That no man versed in the apocalyptic style, can any wise doubt that by " angels" *all* the agents under their presidency are represented." And *Stillingfleet*, their own *Stillingfleet*, calls the argument of the hierarchists from these symbolical titles, a " miserable" one ; thus avenging the Presbyterian upon them, by dealing out to them in their own way, " measure for measure."—

To which side the scale inclines, it is not difficult to discern.

That the epistles in question are addressed to the persons designated by " stars" and " angels," in such a manner as to imply that these persons were invested with authority over the churches, is freely conceded. It is also conceded that " angel" and " star" are titles of office which belong exclusively to the ministry. Unless we greatly mistake, " stars," in the symbolical language, signify, throughout the whole Bible, " ministers of religion."

But we contend that they signify ministers of religion with regard to their *general office*, and not with regard to their *relative dignity*. Jesus Christ is a " star," the twelve apostles are " stars"—and so are the apostate clergy, figured by the " third

part of the stars," which the dragon cast down with his tail to the earth. Who does not see, that the only point in which the symbol agrees to the subject in all these cases, is the common character of the *religious ministry*; distinction of rank being utterly disregarded? On this principle, the "stars" must mean the ministers of the churches without discrimination; every one being a "star." It is, therefore, impossible to discover under this emblem, any order of ministers to the exclusion of any other.

In this general reasoning, the hierarchy might, perhaps, concur without much prejudice to her cause. She might insist, that a symbol, common, in its own nature, to all ministers of religion, is restricted, by the conditions of the text, to a single individual, who, from the functions ascribed to him, must be a superiour officer, and not one of a college, concessus, or presbytery, having equal authority.

There is internal evidence in the passage itself, that this construction, though ingenious and acute, cannot be true. For as the "candlesticks" are emblematical of the churches, and as there is but *one* star to give light to each candlestick, it would follow that there was but a single minister in each of the churches; and thus the Episcopalian would overthrow himself: for without inferiour, there can be no superiour, clergy. Surely he will not say, that the bishop *alone* did *all* the preaching, gave



*all* the instruction, and set *all* the example: i. e. emitted *all* the light on account of which ministers are called “stars.” The other clergy had *some* share in these useful functions. They too “preached the word;” they too, taught “from house to house;” they too, “let their light shine before others.” Now, one “star” being appropriated to one “church,” as one candle is to one “candlestick;” it follows, from the nature of the comparison, that as one candle is the *full complement* of light for one candlestick; so one star is the full complement of light for one church. But the light which shone in these churches did not emanate from any individual; it emanated from a number of individuals; from the *collective body* of the ministers of religion. Therefore, the “star” which expresses the whole light in one of these churches, is a symbol, not of a *single* minister, but of her ministry *collectively*. It would be a darksome diocese, indeed, which should enjoy no rays of light but those which proceed from the bishop.

Let us now advert to the other symbol, viz. “Angel.” This too, the hierarchists, whom we oppose, say, is “*constantly* applied in the book of Revelation to a *single* man, and *never* to a society or number of men.”

It looks somewhat uncivil to contradict so positive an assertion; but we must contradict it; for it is not true. And if, in proving it to be false, we

prove its authors either to be ignorant of the scriptures, or wilfully to misrepresent them, we cannot help it. One passage from the book of Revelation itself, overturns the very foundation upon which *Cyprian* and his associates have reared their “absolute demonstration.”

*I saw, says the prophet, another ANGEL fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to EVERY NATION, and KINDRED, and TONGUE, and PEOPLE. (Rev. xiv. 6.)*

“Heaven,” in this book, is the ascertained symbol of the Christian church, from which issue forth the “ministers of grace” to the nations. As the gospel is preached only by *men*, this “angel” who has it to preach to “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,” must be the symbol of a human ministry. And as it is perfectly evident that no single man can thus preach it, but that there must be a *great company* of preachers to carry it to “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,” the angel mentioned in the text is, and of necessity must be, the symbol of that *great company*. We might produce other examples; but this is decisive. It shows the proposition of Potter, Cyprian, &c. to be one of the most rash and unfounded assertions into which the ardour of party ever betrayed a disputant.

Assuming it now as proved, that the term “angel” is applied in this book to a *collective body*, or

a number of men joined in a common commission, we demand the reason of its being restricted to an individual in the epistles to the churches of Asia. Signifying “a messenger,” it is in itself as applicable to *any* preacher of the gospel as to a diocesan bishop. If he was of old, what most of the diocesans are now, he was, of all the clergy in his diocese, the one who had the *least* claim to the title. To “preach the word,” to “declare the whole counsel of God,” to instruct the people, we are told plainly enough, are not the peculiar attributes of the bishop. By what rule of propriety should *he* be characterised by symbols which are foreign from his appropriate functions? by symbols which describe exactly the functions of those ministers whom, we are taught, they do *not* represent.\*

The advocates of the hierarchy must have summoned up the most desperate resolution, when they ventured upon the declaration which we have

\* “Angel of the church,” is a phrase borrowed from the synagogue. “It answers to the Hebrew *שליח צבור*, the *Legate*, or *delegate of the church*. A name which was given in the synagogue to experienced and learned men, especially the *Doctors* (or teachers,) who were usually *delegated* to pray for the public assembly, whether in ordinary or extraordinary cases. So that by *Angels of the churches* must be here understood those *rulers of the Christian church*, whose office it was to offer up public prayers in the church, to manage sacred concerns, and discourse to the people.” *Vitringæ anacrisis apocalypseos*, p. 25. To the same purpose speaks the profoundly learned *Lightfoot*. *Works*, Vol. I. p. 341. Fol.

exposed. To do them justice, they seem not to have been forsaken of those “compunctious visitings,” which occasionally trouble such as suspect the righteousness of their cause. We infer this from their growing dogmatical and rather unruly in their asseverations, nearly in proportion as they find themselves beset with difficulty. Not unlike men who are accustomed to tell “a tough story,” and when they perceive the credulity of their audience to be too hard pressed, back their veracity with a file of oaths. Any plain reader will observe, on a slight inspection of these epistles, that they address the angel of a particular church in the singular or plural number indifferently. Thus to the angel of the church in *Smyrna*, the Redeemer says, *I know THY works, and tribulation and poverty, but THOU art rich—Fear none of those things which THOU shalt SUFFER. Behold the devil shall cast SOME of YOU into prison, that YE may be tried; and YE shall have tribulation ten days: be THOU faithful unto the death; and I will give THEE a crown of life.\**

We ask any dispassionate man whether all this is not addressed to the *angel* in *Smyrna*? *Thou*, says the text; “Thou,” the angel, “shalt suffer.” How? What? “Thus,” saith the text, “the devil shall cast into prison *some of you*”—you who are signified by the angel. However, “be *thou* faithful unto the death;” i. e. although thou

\* Rev. ii. 8—10.

shouldest die for being faithful; “and I will give thee,” whom? certainly the persecuted, “I will give thee a crown of life.” This is so obvious, that, in order to evade its force, the Episcopal writers represent the epistles as addressed partly to the bishop and partly to the people.

“When what is said relates to the *people*, the style is altered; the plural number is then used.” See Cyprian and Potter as above.

This gloss is contrary,

1. To the plain and natural construction of the prophet’s words; which, using sometimes the singular, and sometimes the plural, number, when speaking of the *angel*, leads us to a simple and easy solution, by supposing that he employs that term in a *collective* sense, of the *whole ministry* of the church.

2. To their own principles which the Episcopal writers have laid down as containing an “absolute demonstration” of the prelatic dignity of these angels, viz. “That the titles of angels and stars are *constantly* applied in the book of Revelation to *single* men, and *never* to a *society* or *number* of men.” The epistle is written to the *angel* in Smyrna. “Angel,” say they, *always* signifies a *single* person, and *never* a number of men; and yet they say, that of this very epistle to the angel, part is addressed directly to the *people*, who are “a society or number of men.”

3. To their own distinction between the emblems which point out the ministry and the churches respectively.

“ The stars and angels,” say they, “ were not the whole church or collective body of Christians. This is proved incontestably from these considerations. The whole churches or collective body of Christians, are represented by “ seven candlesticks,” which are distinguished from the “ seven stars” that are emblems of the angels, the bishops,” &c. See above.

The distinction is just; but it is completely overthrown in their subsequent interpretations. For, in the first place, they tell us very truly, that the collective body of Christians is signified by the symbol of a “ candlestick:” and in the next, that they are directly addressed in the letter sent to the angel, who is, say they, a single person: i. e. they are *explicitly and formally addressed*, under an appellation which is *never applied to them*.

4. To the known use of those scriptural emblems, “ star” and “ angel.” These titles in the context are perfectly synonymous; whatever is meant by “ star,” is acknowledged to be meant by “ angel.” Now both these symbols depict *official* character; and consequently, when applied to the Christian church, cannot mean the people as distinguished from their ministers. Therefore, under the term “ angel,” the ministry and the people cannot be distinctly addressed.

5. To the tenour of the exhortations and promise in the text. If the “ angel” is the collective body of the ministry upon whom the persecution was to fall, then the exhortations, *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer—Be thou faithful unto the death*; and the promise, *I will give thee a crown*

*of life*, are in harmony with the pre-monition that the *Devil should cast some of them into prison*. The anticipation of evil is softened by the assurance of support. But according to the Episcopal construction, the sorrow goes one way and the consolation the other : the bishop is exhorted not to fear : to be faithful unto the death. But it seems that the people only are to bear the calamity. The bishop has a glorious promise of a crown of life ; but not a word to cheer his oppressed flock. Cold comfort this to the poor prisoners cooped up by the devil in a dungeon ! One would think that the “ cup of salvation ” might have been put to the lips which were drinking deeply of the cup of sorrow. But the matter is more dexterously managed : the bishop suffers, and the people are consoled,—by proxy. A mode of suffering, we presume, to which the bishops of the present day, and many others beside them, would submit with great magnanimity. How they would relish the consolation thus administered, is another affair.

*Lastly*, to the authority delegated by Christ to Presbyters : We have formerly proved that every ordinary power left in the church is, in the most direct and unequivocal manner, devolved on Presbyters. And as one part of scripture cannot be repugnant to another, it is impossible that any term or expression here, in this book of the Revelation, can be rightly interpreted, which is said

to lodge the whole power of government and discipline in a bishop, to the exclusion of presbyters.

We do not feel conscious of any arrogance in supposing, that after the reader, who is solicitous to know the truth, shall carefully have examined and compared the reasonings now submitted to him; and allowed them their due force on his mind, he will coincide with us in opinion, that the “angels” and “stars” in the context before us, do NOT *signify single persons*, but *a number of men*; that is, are emblems of a *collective ministry*, and not of *diocesan bishops*.

“Thus endeth the second lesson,” which is concerning Cyprian’s “absolute demonstration” that the angels of the seven churches of Asia were Episcopal prelates.

We now come to the *third* and great fact of the Hierarchy, the prelatical character of Timothy and Titus. The inquiry consists of two parts; the first, concerning their *ordination*, and the second, their *powers*.

Although the Episcopal writers argue less confidently from the first of these topics than from the second; yet it is not unimportant to their cause. For if they can prove that ordination to the ministry in the days of the Apostles was Episcopal, in their sense of the term; that is, that an officer whom they call the bishop, had the *sole power* of ordination, presbyters being permitted merely to express their *consent*—if they can prove



this, it will be hard to escape from the conclusion, that the whole government of the church was prelatical. If they decline much reliance upon it, as Dr. Hobart and the Layman say they do,\* their shyness must be imputed to some other cause than its insignificance ; for they are not in the habit of declining very humble aid ; and our former remarks will show that, though well supplied with *assertions*, they have no *evidence* to spare.

The following texts have been quoted under the present head.

*For* TIMOTHY.

*Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy,* WITH THE LAYING ON OF THE HANDS OF THE PRESBYTERY. 1 *Tim.* iv. 14.

*Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee,* BY THE PUTTING ON OF MY HANDS. 2 *Tim.* i. 6.

*For* TITUS.

*For this cause left I thee in Crete,\* that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting ; and ordain elders in every city,* AS I HAD APPOINTED THEE. *Titus* i. 5.

From these texts one thing is clear, viz. that both Paul and the Presbytery imposed hands on Timothy. But several questions have been started

\* *Collec.* p. 59, note. LAYMAN, No. V. p. 51.

about the rest. Who constituted the Presbytery? Why were hands imposed on Timothy? Was this his consecration to the evangelical ministry? If so, what share had the apostle in the transaction, and what the presbytery? The high church construction is, that “*St. Paul ordained Timothy with the concurrence of the Presbytery.*” By the Presbytery may be understood a number of Apostles who laid their hands on Timothy, since the Apostles, though certainly superiour to Presbyters, style themselves “Elders,” or Presbyters. The Greek expositors understood the passage in this sense as well as the Greek church, both ancient and modern—since in the ordinations of this church, the Presbyters do not lay on their hands with the Bishop. Nor was it the custom in the Western church until the fourth century. But allowing that by the Presbytery is meant a number of Presbyters, it is evident, from a comparison of the two texts, that the Presbyters imposed hands, not to convey authority, but merely to express approbation. “By the putting on of my hands,” “with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.” In the church of England, the Presbyters lay on their hands with the Bishops in ordination, to denote their consent.”\*

As our business, at present, is not with ecclesi-

\* HOBART'S *Festivals and Fasts*. p. 25. The Greek expositors to whom he refers in the margin, are *Chrysostom* and *Theophylact*. Theophylact has copied Chrysostom, whose words are, *ὅτι περὶ πρεσβυτέρων φησὶν ἐνταυθα· ἀλλὰ περὶ ἐπισκοπῶν, οὐ γὰρ ἔτι πρεσβύτεροι τὸν*

astical history, but with the interpretation of scripture, we pass over the allusion to the Greek and Western churches. "The evidence" that "the Presbyters imposed hands not to *convey authority*, but merely to *express approbation*," is extorted from the two prepositions "*by*" and "*with*." "*By* my hands," says Paul: therefore he alone *ordained* Timothy. "*With* the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery," says he again: therefore, the Presbytery merely "expressed their *approbation*."

In support of this "evident" difference between the agency of Paul and that of the Presbytery in the ordination, the Layman has entertained us with some rare criticism which we shall not be so unjust as to withhold from our readers.

"It is known to every Greek scholar, that *dia* signifies, emphatically, the cause of a thing; while *meta* denotes emphatically, nearness of situation, relation, connexion,

ἐπισκοπον χειροτονουν. *Chrys. ad loc.* "He, the apostle, is not speaking here of PRESBYTERS, but of BISHOPS: for Presbyters did not ordain a Bishop." The eloquent Patriarch flounders sadly. He takes for granted, that Timothy was a bishop: to allow that a bishop could be ordained by Presbyters, would demolish the whole fabrick of the hierarchy. Paul had used an ugly word for their spiritual mightinesses; and so, to make short work with him, the golden-mouthed preacher flatly contradicts him. It was a "presbytery," said the apostle. It was a council of bishops, replies Chrysostom. Yet, after all, neither he nor Theophylact, have interpreted the term of *Apostles*. When a writer quotes authorities without consulting them, he should be wary, and be extremely cautious in mentioning names. Dr. H. was probably in haste. Had he stuck closer to Potter, he would have been less inaccurate.

agreement. It need not be observed that words are used sometimes more loosely, and sometimes more strictly. A term is often introduced in a sense different from its original and primary meaning. The two words *dia* and *meta* are opposed in the Epistles of Timothy. Well, then, the two words being opposed, and the first, as every Greek scholar knows, denoting, emphatically, the cause of a thing ; the latter conveying, particularly, the idea of relation, connexion, agreement, it follows, obviously, that they are to be taken in these their appropriate senses. Our author will not venture to say that the Greek word *meta* is as appropriate an one as *dia* to express the cause of a thing. He will not so far hazard his reputation as a scholar. I assert, then, that *dia* signifies, particularly, the cause of a thing, and that *meta* is the preposition of concurrence. Nor is this invalidated by the circumstance of *meta* being sometimes used as *dia* with the genitive case. The emphatical distinction between the two words lies in the first denoting a *cause*, the other *concurrence*. Why does St. Paul carefully use the word *dia* in the one case, and *meta* in the other ? Why does he not use *meta* in both cases ? It is to be recollected too, that the passages are, in his Epistles to Timothy, relating to the same subject ; and of course, the terms must be regarded as contrasted with one another. Surely the words *dia* and *meta*, as opposed, signify, the first, the cause of a thing ; the last, nearness, concurrence, agreement. This is familiar to every Greek scholar, and I assert it on the authority of the best lexicons of the language. The circumstance, then, of the Apostle using a word in relation to himself, which denotes the instrumental cause, and with respect to the Presbytery, a word which, particularly as distinguished from *dia*, expresses agreement, shows, clearly, that the authoritative power was vested in him, and that the act, on the part of the Presbytery, was an act of mere concurrence.”\*

\* *Layman*, No. V. *Coll.* p. 53, 54.

That Presbytery may be left without a shadow of support, these two unhappy prepositions, (*δια* & *μετα*,) (*dia* and *meta*) *by* and *with*, are doomed to the same rack on which Cyprian had formerly tortured a noun, and the Layman himself both a noun and a verb, into witnesses for the hierarchy.\* It being presumed that the imposition of hands relates to Timothy's ordination, the "presbytery," whose act it was, whether composed of mere Presbyters, or of Prelates, or of Apostles, had nothing to do in the affair, but barely to express their *consent*; and if this appear dubious, it shall be substantiated by the deposition of *dia* and *meta*.

"It is known," says the Layman, "to every Greek scholar, that *dia*" (*by*) "signifies, emphatically, the cause of a thing; while *meta*" (*with*) "denotes, emphatically, nearness of situation, relation, connexion, agreement."†

We do not wish to be uncharitable, but, if we must judge from the instances of words, which, in this collection have been unfortunate enough to undergo his critical process, it is very hard for the Layman to tell what a *Greek scholar* knows. Scholars, like other classes of men, have their appropriate habits of speaking and acting: And when one who has had only a dining-room acquaintance with them, affects to be of their number, his awkward imitation betrays him in the same manner as the dialect of a foreigner distinguishes him from a native, as a prime minister would loose the reputa-

\* See p. 54.—62. † *Hobarts Apology*, p. 154.

tion of a statesman by relying on annual registers, on reviews, or the gazettes, for his great political facts. No scholar would have made the Layman's indefinite appeal to "the best lexicons in the language," for settling the meaning of a disputed word. He would have produced *examples* from the only legitimate authorities, the *original writers*.

How the Layman would fare in such hands, we shall not conjecture : but we are sure that a very little acquaintance with Greek is sufficient to pluck away the feathers with which poor *dia* and *meta* have been made to adorn his plume.

"*Dia* signifies, emphatically, the cause of a thing."

For example :

*It is easier for a camel to go THROUGH (dia) the eye of a needle, than, &c.* Math. xix. 24.

*Jcsus went—THROUGH (dia) the cornfields.* Mark ii. 23.

*And again he entercd into Capernaum, AFTER (dia) some days.* Mark ii. 1.

Now what "cause" does the preposition *dia* express here. Does it "emphatically," as the Layman speaks, "signify the *cause*" of the needle's eye? of the cornfields? or of the days? or the "*cause*" of the camel's going through the first? of our Lord's going through the second? or of his spending the third before he went into Capernaum? When the Layman shall have found his emphatical signification of *dia* in these instances, he may call upon us for a hundred more

The fact is, that this preposition *never* signifies the cause of a thing : whatever the “Lexicons” say. It expresses the idea of *transition* or *transmission*, and has no English word to correspond with it so well as the preposition “*through*.” Whether it is accompanied with the notion of a *cause* or not, must be determined by the phrase where it occurs.

But in spoiling the Layman’s criticism, we acknowledge that we have not overthrown his argument. For *if* the imposition of Paul’s hands was the medium *through* which, to the exclusion of the Presbytery, he *alone* conveyed the ministerial commission to Timothy; and *if* this act of his formed a precedent for all subsequent ordinations, the Layman has won, and we own Timothy to have been episcopally ordained : Whether a *bishop* or not, would still remain a question. These *ifs*, however, seem to be rather anti-episcopal.

From the words of Paul, we should conclude, that whoever or whatever else might have been concerned in this august transaction, a material part of it belonged to the Presbytery. *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy,* WITH THE LAYING ON OF THE HANDS OF THE PRESBYTERY. A plain reader would certainly say, that Timothy was *Presbyterially* ordained : as he could not well imagine that a Presbyterian himself would have chosen to word the account differently. But this would be the error of one who

had never heard what marvels can be effected by a little critical legerdemain operating upon Greek prepositions. O no ! This is the very text which proves that his ordination was *not* presbyterial ! Astonishing ! I see Timothy bowing before the Presbytery. I see them imposing hands upon his head : I am told by the Apostle Paul, that the gift which was in him was given him with the laying on of their hands : and yet they did not *ordain* him ! “ No !” Had no *share* in his ordination ! “ No !” Gave him no *gift* at all ! “ No !” Verily this Layman is unceremonious in his behaviour to *words* ; for he will either allow them no meaning at all ; or else, as it may suit him, they shall mean in the mouth of an apostle, the contrary to what they ever have meant or ever shall mean, in the mouth of any other man ! *No* ordination ! *No* communication by the Presbytery ! Why, that old Jesuit, who has foisted the Virgin Mary into every chapter of the book of Proverbs,\* could not himself be more fantastical ! How, in the name of common sense, is the Presbytery disposed of ? Softly, zealous friend, softly. Thou shalt see. Here comes the magician : his wand shall touch the little four-lettered vocabule, “ WITH,” and lo, the whole Presbytery will vanish, and leave only a single ordaining hand !

“ The circumstance of the apostle using a word in relation to himself, which denotes the instrumental cause,” viz. *dia* ;

\* *Vid.* F. Q. DE SALAZAR, *expositio in Proverbia*.



“and with respect to the Presbytery, a word which, particularly as distinguished from *dia*, expresses agreement,” viz. *meta*; “shows, clearly, that the *authoritative* power was vested in him; and that the act, on the part of the Presbytery, was an act of mere *concurrence*.”

So they wrap it up! Let us try to unwrap it a little, and see whether the bundle will bear examination. So far as we can perceive, there is nothing here but a play upon words; and the argument consists in the jingle. The interpretation of the word used by the apostle, is bent and twisted in such a manner as to induce the unlettered reader to suppose that it expresses the *assent* of one person to the act of another. We do not object to the Layman’s translating *meta* by “concurrence;” for according to our great English Lexicographer, “concurrence” signifies “union, association, conjunction:” “Agreement; act of joining in any design or measure”—“combination of many agents or circumstances,” &c.; but popular and colloquial usage often employs it when nothing more is intended than an *approbation* of an opinion or a measure. It is in this sense that the Layman uses it; and it is here that his criticism puts a fraud upon his reader. We do not say that the fraud is intentional; before we can prove this, we must prove that he understands Greek; which we humbly beg leave to decline. But we shall freely give him the “eight or ten years” which his friend has craved,\* in order to

\* HOBART’S *Apology*, p. 241.

support his construction of *meta* by the proper authorities ; and he shall have “ the best lexicons of the language” into the bargain.

But as we do not ask for credence to our bare assertion, we shall subject the Layman’s distinction between *dia* and *meta* to the test of fact.

“ It is to be recollected,” says he, “ that the passages are in his” (Paul’s) “ epistles to Timothy, relating to the same subject ; and of course, the terms,” (viz. *dia* and *meta*,) “ must be regarded as contrasted with one another.”

Be it so. I open my New Testament and read, that “ *many signs and wonders were done BY (dia) the apostles.*” \* Proceeding in the narrative, I read afterwards that Paul and Barnabas *rehearsed all things that God had done WITH (meta) them.* † Now, the Layman being judge, as “ the passages relate to the same subject,” viz. the miraculous works which God enabled his servants to perform, and the success with which he crowned their ministry, “ the terms” *dia* and *meta* “ must be regarded as contrasted with one another. The circumstance, then, of the historian using a word in relation to the apostles in general, which denotes the instrumental cause ; and with respect to Paul and Barnabas, a word which, particularly as distinguished from *dia*, expresses agreement, shows clearly, that the authoritative power was vested in the former, and that the act, on the part of the latter, was an

\* Act ii. 43. πολλὰ τε τεράτα καὶ σημεῖα ΔΙΑ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐγένετο.

† ὅσα ὁ θεὸς ποιήσῃ MET’ αὐτῶν — Act. xv. 4.

act of mere concurrence." In fewer words, when Peter, James, &c. wrought miracles, they did it in virtue of an authoritative power; and when Paul and Barnabas wrought miracles, they had no authoritative or instrumental agency, but merely expressed their *approbation* of what God did *without* them; although the historian has positively asserted that he did it *with* them. All this from the difference between *dia* and *meta*!

Should the Layman by any means escape from this difficulty, it will be to fall into another still greater. Before he ventured upon the criticism now under review, he ought to have read, in the original, the verse which he has undertaken to criticise. There he would have found his *dia* and *meta* in the same proposition, and separated only by a single word. *The gift*, says Paul to Timothy, *which was given thee BY (dia) prophecy, WITH (meta) the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.\** That the terms relate to the same subject, is indisputable; and of course, says the Layman, they are "contrasted with one another. The circumstance, then," proceeds he, "of the apostle using a word in relation to prophecy, which denotes the instrumental cause; and, with respect to the Presbytery, a word which, particularly as distinguished from *dia*, expresses agreement, shows, clearly, that the authoritative power was vested in the

\* 1 Tim. iv. 14.

*prophecy*; and that the act, on the part of the Presbytery, was an act of mere concurrence."

The result of the Layman's criticism is, that Timothy had *two* ordinations, by *two* authoritative powers, viz. the prophecy, and the apostle Paul; and *two* concurrences of the Presbytery, viz. one with prophecy, and one with the apostle. We cannot deny that he was *well* ordained!

From words let us go to things, and see what the Episcopal argument will gain by the exchange. The imposition of hands on the part of the Presbytery, was an act, it is said, of "mere concurrence;" designed to express approbation, and not at all to convey the ministerial office.\*

This assertion is not only without proof, but is directly in the face of all the proof which the nature of the case admits.

1. By what rule of reasoning is the *very same act*, viz. imposition of hands, performed at the *same time*, in relation to the *same subject*, considered as expressing the communication of *authority* by *one* of the persons engaged, and only as expressing *approbation* by all the *rest*? When certain distinctions have taken place, it is easy to invent other distinctions to justify them. But is it credible? does it belong to the nature of significant rites, that a rite signifying the conferring of power should be employed by a number of persons in a *concur-*

\* HOBART and the LAYMAN, as above.

rent act, and yet, with regard to all but *one* of them, not signify the conferring power at all?

2. The advocates of prelacy are challenged to produce from the scriptures, or other authentic records of the apostolic and preceding ages, proof that imposition of hands was used to signify mere assent or approbation. To say that it *might* so signify, is nothing to the purpose. The point to be determined is, not what it *might*, but what it *did*, signify. If, in every other case, imposition of hands expressed authoritative communication, it must have done so in the ordination of Timothy; and to maintain that it did not, is to beg the question. The Episcopal construction violates the plainest meaning both of words and of actions. The Presbyterian construction is in perfect coincidence with both. Paul says that the gift in Timothy was given to him *by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery*. It is agreed that prophecy, or prophecies which went before on Timothy, designated him as a fit person for the ministry: but did not invest him with office—did not give him the gift. Had there been nothing else but the prophecy, he would have had no commission. It was necessary that the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery should *concur* with the prophetical designation, or Timothy had remained a layman. The Presbytery did thus concur; they did lay their hands on Timothy, and he received his office. Now as the prophecy made no part of

his ordination ; it follows, that he was ordained by the Presbytery. If the gift which was in him by the imposition of Paul's hands, was his ministerial commission, that apostle had no share in it which was not common to every member of the Presbytery ; or else his declaration, that Timothy was ordained by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, would not be true. Nor is there any thing in his expression which might not be used by every one of his colleagues, and with peculiar propriety by himself, if, as it is not improbable, he presided at Timothy's ordination.

To exhibit this subject in another light, we propose a few questions which some of the advocates for prelacy would do no disservice to their cause by answering in such a manner as to remove the scruples they must naturally occasion.

1. Did Paul *alone* ordain Timothy ? or was his ordination the joint act of the Presbytery ? If the latter, we have a complete scriptural example of Presbyterial ordination. If the former, so that the Presbytery, by the imposition of their hands, merely testified their *assent*, then,

2. Were the persons who thus imposed hands on Timothy simple Presbyters, or were they apostles or prelates ? If the latter, then,

3. How came Paul to appropriate to himself a power which belonged to every one of them in as full right as it could possibly belong to him ? How came they to surrender this their power into the

hands of an individual? And how could the imposition of Paul's hands bestow the ministerial gift, while others, possessing the same *authority*, did, by the very same *act*, at the very same *time*, merely declare their *assent*?

If the former, i. e. if those who concurred with Paul in the imposition of hands were simple Presbyters, then,

4. What ordination did Timothy receive? Was he ordained a *Presbyter* or a *Prelate*? If the former, his Episcopal character, in so far as it depends upon his ordination, is swept away; and we have not a single instance of the consecration of a prelate in all the New Testament. If the latter, then,

5. How came simple Presbyters to impose hands upon the head of a Bishop at his consecration? Or supposing these Presbyters to have been Prelates, where was Timothy's commission? By the terms of the argument, he was ordained by Paul alone; but according to the Episcopal order, which we are assured is the apostolical order, *two or three bishops* are necessary to ordain a bishop.\*

\* Επισκοπος ὑπο ἐπισκοπων χειροτονεῖσθω ΔΥΟ ἢ ΤΡΙΩΝ. *Can. Apos. I. Apud PP. App. Tom. I. p. 442. Ed. Clerici.* On this canon, Bishop Beveridge thus comments. "This right, therefore, used by the apostles themselves, and prescribed, by apostolical men, our church," meaning the church of England, "most religiously observes; and, as far as possible, it ought, beyond all doubt, to be observed every where. But when necessity, that most unrelenting mistress, shall require it, the rigour of the canon may be so far relaxed, as that a bishop may be ordained by *two*." *Ibid* p. 457.

And so poor Timothy was not ordained a bishop at all. If, in order to give him his mitre, we make the Presbytery to consist of Apostles, or men of apostolic rank, we not only prostrate the Layman's famous criticism about *dia* and *meta*, but are left without the vestige of an ordination by a prelate alone, in so far as that point is to be made out by the ordination of Timothy.\* There remains nothing but an example of ordination by a Presbytery, which is all that the Presbyterians desire.

We cannot dismiss this point without remarking how our prelatical friends shift their ground.

Two things are to be proved: that Timothy was a Bishop; and, that a Bishop alone ordains. For the *first*, according to our Episcopal brethren, the Presbytery, who joined with Paul in laying hands on Timothy, were bona fide prelates, who, jointly with the apostle, imparted the Episcopal dignity; and so Timothy is a bishop without any more ado. But for the *second*, the Presbytery were *not* prelates; or if they were, they did *not* ordain jointly with the apostle; they merely expressed their approbation.

“The legs of the lame are not equal.” If we adopt the first, we lose the proof of ordination by a Bishop alone. If the second, we lose the ordination of bishop Timothy. The *latter* makes *dia*

\* Ordination performed by Titus shall hereafter be considered.



show “clearly, that the authoritative power was vested in Paul,” and *meta*, that “the act on the part of the Presbytery, was an act of mere concurrence.” The *former* shows, with equal clearness, that the authoritative power was *not* vested in Paul alone; that the act on the part of the Presbytery, was *not* an act of mere concurrence; and that there is nothing in *dia* and *meta* to establish the contrary. When a circle and a square coincide, then shall these two arguments for prelacy be consistent with each other.

So much for *Timothy's* ordination. Now for that of *Titus*. Him, too, the Layman has ordained Episcopally.

“To Titus the apostle says, *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee.* Here let it be observed, in passing along, that Titus is spoken of as having been ordained by the apostle: *As I had appointed thee.* Nothing is said of the Presbytery in this case. Paul appointed Titus to his office. And this is a conclusive circumstance for believing that the case was the same in relation to Timothy, as it is not reasonable to suppose that they were commissioned in different ways.”\*

We agree that the office of Timothy and Titus was the same, and that they were commissioned in the same manner. But the Layman has overshoot his mark. For, as we have already stated, the advocates for the divine right of Episcopacy maintain that the ordination of a bishop by *two or*

\* LAYMAN, No. V. *Collec.* p. 56.

three others, is an apostolical institution: and that even in cases of the *hardest necessity*, two bishops are essential to the ordination of a *third*. One of two consequences is inevitable; either that Paul exercised, on this occasion, his extraordinary power, and so has set no precedent; or, if he set a precedent for ordination by a single prelate, Titus was no more than a presbyter, and could not by himself, ordain other presbyters. All this rests upon the assumption that the expression, *as I had appointed thee*, refers to the ordination of Titus. Another blunder. There is not a syllable about his ordination in the text. It pre-supposes his authority, and relates solely to the *directions* which the apostle had given him for the application of it. The word rendered, "*appointed*," frequently occurs in the New Testament, but always, with the construction before us, in the sense of prescribing, enjoining, commanding: and never in the sense of setting apart to an office—Thus,

*He* COMMANDED (*διεταξατο*) *a centurion to keep Paul*. Acts xxiv. 23. Surely Felix did not then give the centurion his military commission.

*As God hath distributed to every man; as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk: and so* ORDAIN I, (*διατασσομαι*) *direct, enjoin I, in all churches*. 1 Cor. vii. 17.

In the very same manner does Paul speak to Titus.

*As I had* APPOINTED (*διεταξαμην*) *instructed, enjoined, thee*.

The word which expresses investiture with office is quite different, as this very verse shows; and the author of *Miscellanies*\* had remarked: but this circumstance, Dr. Hobart, though not sparing of his notes, passes over in profound silence.

We come, at length, to the decisive argument for diocesan Episcopacy—the *powers* exercised by Timothy and Titus. This is to silence the last battery of the Presbyterians, and reduce them to the humiliating necessity of surrendering at discretion! Really one would imagine, that the powers of Timothy and Titus are a new discovery: and that the epistles written to them by Paul, had been in the custody of the prelates alone as containing the precious charter of their rights. But the world may believe us, upon our word of verity, that we have actually read those epistles long ago; and that the demonstration, said to be therein contained, of the apostolical institution of the “sacred regiment of Bishops,” has been questioned, yea and, in our judgment, confuted some handful of years before our grandfathers were born. However, *Ecce iterum Crispinus!* Here it is again. We shall give unto thee, reader, as Cyprian and the Layman have given it unto us. But we entreat thy patience to some preliminary matter.

We think that when the Episcopal writers ap-

\* CLEMENS, No. I. *Collec.* p. 77.

peal, with so much confidence, to the powers exercised by Timothy, they ought also to have agreed as to the *office* and *rank* of that eminent man. Yet it is a disputed point among them, at this hour, whether he was simply Bishop of Ephesus, having jurisdiction over his presbyters; or an archbishop, having bishops under him; or the lord primate of Asia, above them all. If you ask the advocates of these several opinions, what was precisely his authority? some cry one thing, and some another: for the assembly is confused; and their voices unite only in this, Great is Timothy of the Ephesians! We cannot refrain from transcribing a few remarks of the powerful and eloquent JEAN DAILLE.

“Here,” we translate his own words, “Here the hierarchs, having their imagination full of their grand prelatures, of their bishoprics, their archbishoprics, and their primacies, do not fail to dream of one in these words of the Apostle. That *he besought Timothy to abide still at Ephesus*, signifies, if you believe them, that he made Timothy bishop of the church of Ephesus; and not only that, but even Metropolitan, or archbishop of the province; and even primate of all Asia. You see how ingenious is the passion for the crosier and the mitre; being able, in so few and simple words, to detect such great mysteries! For where is the man, who, in the use of his natural understanding without being heated by a previous attach-

ment, could ever have found so many *mitres*—that of a Bishop, that of an Arch-bishop, and that of a Primate, in these two words, *Paul besought Timothy to abide still at Ephesus?* Who, without the help of some extraordinary passion, could ever have made so charming and so rare a discovery? \* and imagine that to beseech a man to stay in a city, means, to establish him bishop of that city, Archbishop of the province, and primate of a the country? In very deed, the cause of these gentlemen of the hierarchy must be reduced to an evil plight, † since they are constrained to resort to such pitiful proofs. ‡

Our readers will hardly blame *Daille* for applying the epithet “pitiful,” to the argument of the hierarchy for Timothy’s Episcopate, when they see that her ablest and most resolute champions are at irreconcilable variance with each other on this very point: some maintaining it as perfectly con-

\* Deviner une chose si belle & si rare?—

† A de mauvais termes.

‡ DAILLE’ *Exposition de la premiere epitre de l’Apotre Saint Paul à Timothée; en 48 sermons prononcés à CHARENTON. Sermon*. I. p. 22, 23. a Geneve 1661. 12mo.

This is that identical ‘Monsieur DAILLE’ whom Mr. BINGHAM and, from him, Dr. HOBART have represented as friendly to Episcopacy.\* This is that JEAN DAILLE’! The prelatical commentators have played tricks with the French preacher; which, if we feel in a humour for it, we may one of these days expose.

\* HOBART’S *Apology*, p. 94, compared with p. 99. BINGHAM’S *Christian Antiquities*. Vol. II. p. 799.

clusive ; others rejecting it as weak and frivolous. The mere fact of this variance is a strong presumption against the former, and in favour of the latter. For although vigorous, cultivated, and candid minds may be so far warped by their wishes as to lay more stress upon an argument *for* them than it deserves ; yet it is hardly to be supposed that such minds will attribute to an argument which, if sound, secures them the victory, much *less* importance than it possesses. If, then, there are to be found among the advocates of Episcopacy, men second to none of them in learning, force, and sagacity, who fairly give up the plea from Timothy and Titus, the conclusion is, that their concession is extorted against their prejudices and interest.

As a specimen of the collision which takes place, on this subject, between the most zealous supporters of prelacy, we transcribe a part of the *seventh* section of the Appendix to AXTON'S *Original Constitution of the Christian Church*. It has not been in our power to compare all his quotations with the authors, but we have examined a number and they are correct.

“ The chief plea and argument of the Episcopalians is taken from Timothy and Titus. But however much this is boasted of by some, as a conclusive proof for a diocesan form of church government, and superior power of Bishops to that of Presbyters ; yet there is nothing adduced by them that is more violently opposed by others of them, and in which they are more egregiously divided. For some of them pretend, that the

Apostle, in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus, uses the terms Bishop and Presbyter promiscuously, only to express such officers as are now called Presbyters. Of this opinion I take Bishop Hoadley to be, Dr. Whitby, Mr. Dodwell, and many others might be named.

“ But how contradictory to this is the judgment of Bishop Pearson, *Vindicia. Lib. 2. Cap. 13.* Bishop Taylor, *Episc. assert. P. 85.* Bishop Burnet, in his *History of the Right of Princes, Prefac. p. 15.* and p. 4, 5. of the Book : and Dr. Hammond, in a variety of places. I say, how contradictory are these sentiments of those prelates to this above named ? seeing they hold, that all those whom they were to ordain were proper bishops, nay, Dr. Hammond’s opinion is, that Timothy and Titus were Archbishops, and had their suffragans under them ; and with him bishop Bull seems to agree, when he calls Timothy Archbishop, *Serm. on 2 Tim. iv. 13.* And to these I could add others of the same mind. But, then as Dr. Hammond reckoned, that the Apostles ordained no mere Presbyters at the first, but only Bishops, *Annot. on Acts xi. 6, 14.* so Dodwell, *Parænes, p. 54. p. 13. and p. 102. p. 33.* must certainly contradict him in this, when he maintains, that the Apostles at the first ordained no *Bishops*, but simple *Presbyters* only ; and that there is no mention of Episcopal government in the New Testament, and that it was not established till *Anno 106.* But then, according to both these Doctors, there is one office in the church without scripture warrant—*Presbyters*, according to Dr. Hammond ; and *Bishops*, according to Mr. Dodwell. But how will they answer to what is advanced by Bishop Burnet, which equally contradicts them both, *Vindic. of the Church of Scotland, p. 355. That without Scripture warrants no new office may be instituted ?* Besides Dr. Hammond’s conceit against Presbyters not being instituted in the New Testament, is opposed with all freedom by Mr. Maurice, *Defens. p. 27.* and by Bishop Hoadley, *Brief Defence, p. 113.* Is it possible to behold such wrangling,

without being affected with a mixture both of indignation and compassion? Is it not matter of indignation, that men of judgment and learning should have such a fondness to maintain a cause that is so precarious, as to drive them into so many schemes to defend it, and every one of them contradictory to one another? And can it miss to beget compassion in the breast of every sincere Christian, that men of abilities should bestow so much time to perplex themselves and others, when their labours, rightly employed, might prove much more beneficial to the Protestant world?

“ But that we may give the world a view, how inconclusive all these schemes and models are, which are taken from Timothy and Titus, I shall give some account of the minds of the Episcopalians at some length, who, when adduced, will leave no room for the Presbyterians to be in any perplexity in the defence of their establishment. The first I shall bring on the stage is the famous Willet, *Synops. Papism.* p. 236. ‘It is most like Timothy had the place and calling of an evangelist: and the calling of evangelists and bishops, which were pastors, was divers.’ To him let us join the learned Stillingfleet, who says, *Irenic.* p. 340. ‘Such were the evangelists, who were sent sometimes into this country to put the church in order there, sometimes into another; but wherever they were, they acted as evangelists, and not as fixed officers. And such were Timothy and Titus, notwithstanding all the opposition made against it, as will appear to any who will take an impartial survey of the arguments on both sides,’ &c. Nay, the jesuit Salmeron, is ashamed of this argument, for he says, *Disput.* 1. on 1 *Tim.* ‘It is doubtful if Timothy was Bishop of Ephesus: for though he preached and ordained some to the ministry there, it follows not that he was the Bishop of that place; for Paul preached also there above two years, and absolved the penitents, and yet was not Bishop. Add that now and then the apostle called him away unto himself, and sent him from Rome to the Hebrews with his epistle; and in the second



epistle, he commands him to come to him shortly. Timothy was also an evangelist of that order, *Eph.* 4.—So that Dorotheus says in his *Synopsis*, That Timothy preached through all Greece ; but he stayed at Ephesus not to be Bishop, but that, in the constitute church of Ephesus, he might oppose the false Apostles.—It appears therefore that he was more than a Bishop, although for a time he preached in that city as a pastor, and ordained some to the ministry. Hence it is, some calls him Bishop in Ephesus.’

“ Having elsewhere given the judgment of the learned Dr. Whitby at some length, all that I shall transcribe from him at this time, is a few lines of what he says in his preface to the Epistle to Titus: ‘ First, I assert, that if by saying Timothy and Titus were Bishops, the one of Ephesus, the other of Crete, we understand they look upon these churches or dioceses as their fixed and peculiar charge, in which they were to preside for term of life, I believe, that Timothy and Titus were not thus Bishops.’ See Chap. 1 and 4.

“ To fortify those who have given their assault, let me bring in Mr. Le Clerc, in his *Supplement to Dr. Hammond’s Annotations on the Epistle to Titus*, p. 530. who says, ‘ The testimonies of the ancients about this matter, who judge rashly of the times of the apostles by their own, and speak of them in the language of their own age, are of little moment. And so do no more prove that Titus was the Bishop of the island of Crete, than what Dr. Hammond says, proves him to have been distinguished with the title of Archbishop.’ To the same purpose the forecited Dr. Whitby says, ‘ The great controversy concerning this and the epistle to Timothy is, whether Timothy and Titus were indeed made Bishops ; the one in Ephesus, and the Pro-consular Asia, the other of Crete, and having authority to make, and jurisdiction over so many Bishops as were in those precincts ? Now, of this matter, I confess I can find nothing in any writer of the first three centuries, and not any intimation, that they bore that name.’

“ The judgment of the learned Whittaker is supporting on this occasion, as well as in the most of the former, who says, *Contröv.* 4. Q. 4. C. 2. p. 374. ‘ In the apostle’s times there were many things extraordinary. There was another form of government in the church in the days of the apostles, and another now, is acknowledged by Stapleton : For it was then governed by the apostles, evangelists, and prophets, but now only by pastors and doctors ; the rest are all removed.’ From this it may justly be inferred, that Timothy and Titus were not ordinary officers, but they being both evangelists, are not succeeded to by Bishops. And here I cannot but subjoin the judgment of Chrysostom, whom our adversaries, I hope, will not reject as an adversary. His words, as translated by Smectymnuus, are these, *Paul would not commit the whole island to one man, but would have every man appointed to his charge and cure. For so he knew his labour would be the lighter, and the people that were under him would be governed with the greater diligence. For the teacher should not be troubled with the government of many churches, but only intend one, and study for to adorn that.* The remark of Smectymnuus is just, *Therefore this was Titus his work, not to be Bishop of Crete himself, but to ordain Elders in every city, which was an office above that of a Bishop.*

“ But this fortification is not able to stand ; for the remarkable Mr. Dodwell, *Parænes.* Sect. 10. p. 404. attacks it most handsomely, when he says, ‘ But truly, that the office of [Timothy] was not fixed, but itinerary, many arguments do evince. It was required of him to abide at Ephesus, is testified by the Apostle, 1 *Tim.* i. 3. He was therefore, when thus demanded, an itinerary. The work of an Evangelist, 2 *Tim.* vi. 5. so many journeyings with St. Paul, and his name being joined in common with the Apostle, in the inscription of the epistles to the Thessalonians, are all of them arguments for this. Moreover, the apostle commands Titus only to ordain, in Crete, Presbyters in every city, *Titus* i. 5. He says, he was left there, that

ne might set in order things that were wanting. And he was a companion of the apostle when he was left. And truly, other places make it appear, that he was a companion of St. Paul, and therefore was no more restricted to any particular place than the apostle himself.' Thus the famous Dodwell. And from what has been said from so many learned Episcopalian Doctors, one may consider, how far Bishop Hall had lost his senses, when he saith with such a masterly air, *Episcop. Divine Right*, Sect. 4. P. 2. *That if Episcopal power of ordination, and power of ruling and censuring Presbyters, be not clear in the apostle's charge to these two Bishops, the one of Crete, and the other of Ephesus, I shall yield the cause, and confess to want my senses."*

"But now, to dismiss this conceit of Timothy's being Bishop of Ephesus, &c. I shall give the judgment of the learned Willet, *Synops. Papism. Contr.* 5. Q. 3. 'Neither can it be granted by the words of the Apostle, *Lay hands suddenly on no man*, &c. that Timothy had this sole power in himself; for, the apostle would not give that to him, which he did not take to himself, who associated to him the rest of the Presbyters in ordaining of Timothy. — It is questioned, says he, if the apostle had then constituted Timothy bishop there [Ephesus:] For, he saith, *That thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine*, &c. I conclude with the judgment of the accurate Dr. Barrow, *Pope's Suprem.* p. 82. whose words must certainly contradict this notion concerning Timothy's Episcopate; for he says, 'Episcopacy is an ordinary standing charge, affixed to one standing place, and requiring a special attendance there; Bishops being Pastors, who, as St. Chrysostom says, do sit, and are employed in one place. Now, he that hath such a general charge, can hardly discharge such a particular office, and he is fixed to a particular attendance, can hardly look after so general a charge.' Though this is spoken with respect to the Apostles; yet it will equally hold

with respect to Timothy and Titus. I think, by this time, this strong bulwark has almost lost its beautiful shapes, and formidable figures, and is not capable of doing much execution. The itinerary life of the apostles, according to Barrow, is inconsistent with that of a Bishop, and must be so likewise with that of Timothy and Titus, seeing they were not fixed residents in any particular place, as is well observed by Mr. Dodwell : and it must conclude against them with equal force, if Dr. Brett's notion be true, that they were both of the Apostolic order."

No equitable judge would censure us for leaving these sons of the hierarchy to dash their heads against each other, and declining to give ourselves any further trouble. We are not obliged to inquire into the claim which they set up for Timothy or Titus, until they shall themselves ascertain what the claim is ; nor to answer their plea, until they shall cease to quarrel about its correctness. But, instead of taking so mortifying an advantage, we shall meet the question as it is stated by Cyprian and the Layman ; referring to our readers for an opinion whether or not we are afraid to have the cause tried either at Ephesus or in Crete ; and under any form which our Episcopal friends shall prefer.

" In Titus i. 5." says Cyprian, " it is said by the Apostle Paul, ' For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest ordain Elders in every city.' " Let us contemplate the circumstances that attended this transaction, and see what inferences we can draw from it. St. Paul had planted the gospel in the island of Crete. He had made proselytes in every city who stood in need of the ministrations of Presbyters. He

speaks not to Titus as if he had left him in Crete to convert the cities to the faith. He speaks as if this work was already accomplished, as if the way was paved for the establishment of the Church. These being the circumstances of the case, it appears to me that this transaction carries on its face a proof of superiority on the part of Titus to the Presbyters or elders. Will it be imagined by any reasonable man, that St. Paul had converted so many cities on this island without having ordained any elders amongst them? What! When it was his uniform and invariable practice to ordain Elders in every country in which he made proselytes? What! Could he have neglected to ordain those amongst them who were absolutely necessary to transact the affairs of the Church during his absence? Would he have left the work he had begun only half performed?

“ These considerations are sufficient to convince every unprejudiced mind that there were Elders or Presbyters in the Church of Crete at the time St. Paul left Titus on that island. And if there were Presbyters, and those Presbyters had the power of ordination, why was it necessary to leave Titus amongst them in order to perform a task that might as well have been accomplished without him? If the Presbyters possessed an authority equal to that of Titus, would not St. Paul, by leaving him amongst them, have taken the surest way to interrupt the peace of the Church, to engender jealousy, and strifes, and contentions? Again. Let us view this transaction in another point of light. St. Paul had made converts, as I have said, in every city of Crete. Titus had attended him on his last visit to that island. If Presbyters were at this time considered as competent to the task of ordaining others, why did he not ordain one at any rate during his stay amongst them, and commission him instead of detaining Titus, to ordain Elders in every city? The efforts of Titus were as much wanted as his own, to carry the light of the gospel to other nations who had not received it. Why

was it necessary that Titus should ordain Elders in *every* city? After the ordination of a *few*, would not *his* exertions have become useless, if *they* were able to complete the work which he had begun?

“ In short, Titus seems to be entrusted with all the authority of a supreme ruler of the Church. He is directed to ordain Presbyters—to rebuke with all authority—to admonish hereticks, and in case of obstinacy, to reject them from the communion of the Church. These circumstances infallibly designate the presence of a Bishop. Accordingly we find that the united voice of ancient writers declares him to have been the first Bishop of Crete. Eusebius informs us ‘ that he received Episcopal authority over the Church of Crete.’ So also says Theodoret, St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose. If these considerations united do not show that Titus possessed in Ephesus powers superior to those which were held by the Presbyters of those Churches, I know not what considerations would.”\*

And again :

“ The case of Timothy alone, had we no other evidence from Scripture, would, when taken into connexion with the testimony of ancient writers, be perfectly satisfactory to me. This alone demonstrates all that we can desire. He was placed by St. Paul to superintend the Church of Ephesus. This case is even stronger than was that of Titus in Crete. It cannot be denied that there had long been Presbyters in the Church of Ephesus. Listen then to the language which St. Paul speaks in his Epistles to him, and see if it is possible that he possessed no superiority over the Presbyters of that Church. ‘ I besought thee,’ says he to Timothy, ‘ to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.’ Would Timothy have been commissioned to charge

\* CYPRIAN, No. II. *Collec.* p. 64, 65.

the Presbyters to teach no other doctrine had he possessed no superiority over them? Would they not have had a right to resist any attempts at a control of this kind as an encroachment on their privileges? Again, Timothy is directed to try and examine the Deacons, whether they be blameless or not. If they prove themselves worthy, he is to admit them into the office of a Deacon; and upon a faithful discharge of that office, they are to be elevated to a higher station. 'Likewise,' says he, 'must the Deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.' 'Let these also be first proved, and then let them use the office of a Deacon, being found blameless.' Here we find no mention made of the Presbyters of Ephesus, in the ordination of Deacons. They are not associated with him at all in the work. Does not this indicate, does it not demonstrate a superiority of power on the part of Timothy? Timothy is also exhorted to 'lay hands suddenly on no man.' There is no such thing as a recognition even of the co-operation of Presbyters with him. He seems to be the *supreme* and the *only* agent in the transaction of these affairs.

"Now, I appeal to the common sense of mankind, had the Presbyters of Ephesus possessed an authority equal to that of Timothy; had they, like him, possessed the power of ordination, would not St. Paul have recognized their agency in connexion with his? Would it not have been to treat them with improper neglect not to mention them? But what consummates our evidence on this point, and places the subject beyond all doubt, is the charge which St. Paul gives to Timothy in relation to the penal discipline he was to exercise over his Presbyters. Timothy is required to 'receive an accusation against an elder or Presbyter, only before two or three witnesses.' 'Them, (that is, those amongst the Presbyters,) that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear.' Can any one imagine that Timothy would have been com-

missioned to *listen to accusations made against Presbyters*, openly to *rebuke them*, had not his authority transcended theirs? Does not this single circumstance unquestionably establish the point of his superiority? ‘The man,’ says a learned and ingenious writer of our country, ‘who shall not find a Bishop in Ephesus, will be puzzled to find one in England.’\*

“ I cannot conceive of a case that could be more clear and unequivocal, that could speak more loudly to the common sense of mankind, than the case of Timothy in Ephesus. He is obviously intrusted with apostolic authority. Every thing which the Apostle could do in his own person, he commissions Timothy to perform during his absence. He is to *adjust the affairs of the church*; he is to prove and examine Deacons; he alone is to *ordain them*; he alone is recognized in the performance of the task of *ordaining Elders or Presbyters*; he possesses *perfect control* over these Presbyters. If they are guilty of any offences or misdemeanours, he is to *inflict punishment* upon them. I cannot conceive of a case more satisfactory in proof of the apostolic original of the Episcopal form of Church government. Had Timothy been of the same order with the Presbyters of Ephesus, can it be imagined that the Apostle would, by elevating him to such high privileges amongst them, have endangered the peace of the Church, have taken a step so well calculated to excite discontent and dissatisfaction amongst the remaining Presbyters or Elders? This cannot be imagined. Timothy was then undeniably intrusted with Episcopal authority in the Church of Ephesus; he was the Bishop of that place. This is proved by the concurring voice of ancient writers. Eusebius tells us ‘that he was the first Bishop of the province or diocese of Ephesus.’ The anonymous author of his life in Phocius says, ‘that he was the first that acted as Bishop in Ephesus, and that he was ordained Bishop of the metropolis of Ephesus by the great St. Paul.’ In the council of Chalce-

\* Dr. Bowden, in his answer to Dr. Stiles.



don twenty-seven bishops are said to have succeeded in that chair from Timothy. To prove the same point goes the testimony of St. Chrysostom and Theodoret; and in the apostolical constitutions we are expressly told, that he was ordained Bishop of Ephesus by St. Paul.”\*

The *Layman* speaks to the same purpose.

“In whom was the power of ordination vested in the Churches of Ephesus and Crete? Clearly in Timothy and Titus alone. Them alone the apostle addresses, and them alone he speaks of as ordaining Elders, or as committing the things they had received from him to faithful men, capable of teaching others. Is this not utterly inconsistent with the Presbyterian system? What individual among them could with propriety be addressed as the apostle addresses Timothy and Titus? Not one. The power among them is in a numerous body of *equals*, lest there should be ‘*lords over God’s heritage.*’ The power, in Ephesus and Crete, was in Timothy and Titus, to whom the Presbyters were subject, liable to be tried and punished for misconduct. It is on this plain statement of facts, relative to Ephesus and Crete, as well as to other churches, taken in connexion with the uniform and uninterrupted testimony of the church universal for fifteen hundred years, that Episcopalians rest their cause. They have never endeavoured to derive arguments from the names made use of. This has been the practice, exclusively, of the advocates of parity. Driven from the ground of fact, not able to deny that Timothy and Titus were supreme Governors in the churches of Ephesus and Crete, possessing alone the power of ordination, they say that Timothy is called a Presbyter, and was therefore upon a level with those very elders whom he ruled, whom he could control as to the doctrines they preached, whom he had power to try and to punish!”†

\* CYPRIAN, No. III. *Collec.* p. 74, 75.

† LAYMAN, No. V. *Collec.* p. 56.

“ It is very easy,” says he, “ to see why the advocates of parity would exclude from view the situation of Timothy in the church of Ephesus, since it carries absolute death to their cause. Is it an immaterial circumstance that Timothy ruled the whole church of Ephesus, both clergy and laity, the Elders or Presbyters being subject to his spiritual jurisdiction? Is it an immaterial circumstance that Timothy alone exercised the power of ordaining Ministers, and thus of conveying the sacerdotal authority? What then becomes of the doctrine of parity? Destroyed, utterly destroyed. The Church of Ephesus, planted by St. Paul, and placed, by that Apostle, under the government of Timothy, was constructed upon a totally different principle. It had, in Timothy, a Bishop, possessing jurisdiction over the other clergy, and exercising all the powers which are claimed for the Bishops of the church now. Is it of no consequence that the ancients, who speak on the subject, unanimously represent Timothy as the first Bishop of Ephesus? What says Eusebius? ‘ He was the first Bishop of the province or diocese of Ephesus.’ Eccl. Hist. Bib. iii. chap. 4. What says Chrysostom? ‘ It is manifest Timothy was intrusted with a whole nation, viz. Asia.’ Hom. 15th in 1 Tim. v. 19. Theodoret calls him the Apostle of the Asiatics. The Apostolical constitutions expressly tell us that he was ordained Bishop of Ephesus by St. Paul; and in the council of Chalcedon, twenty-seven Bishops are said to have succeeded him in the government of that Church.

“ We are perfectly safe, then, so far as relates to Timothy, in resting our cause upon the situation which he occupied at Ephesus, and on the powers which he exercised there. The constitution of the Church of Ephesus was undeniably Episcopal. This part of the subject the advocates of parity do not choose to meddle with, running off constantly to the term *Presbytery*, that poor word being the chief basis of their cause.”\*

\* *Proscript to the LAYMAN*, No. VIII. *Collec.* p. 81.

And thus the Episcopal arm has “carried death to our cause !” And thus “the doctrine of parity” is “destroyed, utterly destroyed !”

Not so fast, good Mr. Layman. We have an objection or two to such a settlement of our affairs ; and shall take the liberty of stating them.

The reader will remember that we confine ourselves, at present, to the *Scriptural* argument ; and therefore shall not notice any quotations from the Fathers. One thing at a time ; and every thing in its place.

This is the argument which the Layman tells us “the advocates of parity do not choose to meddle with.” If it be so, the terrour is needless. But the assertion is only a polemical flourish, such as the Layman is accustomed to make for the entertainment of his friends : the fact, as usual, being quite the other way. For if he will be at the trouble, for the first time, as we presume, in his life, to inspect the writings of the advocates of parity at any period from the reformation to this day, he will find that they have not only “meddled” with his argument, but so mauled and maimed it, so battered and crushed it, that even skilful diocesan doctors have given it up for dead, and wondered at that delirious fondness which, instead of decently interring it, insisted upon keeping it above ground. Its ghost, however, seems disquieted, and walks in company with the Lay-

man and Cyprian, to frighten the Presbyterian women and children—We must lay it.

Merriment apart—What do these long extracts, with their glowing interrogations, prove? Why, that Timothy and Titus were superior to Presbyters! Who denies it? “What! do you allow that they had, severally, the power of ordaining to the ministry, by their sole authority?” Yes, we do! That they had authority to inquire into the doctrines taught by Presbyters?” Yes. “To coerce the unruly?” Yes. “To expel the heretical?” Yes—We never thought of disputing it—“Then, certainly, they were diocesan Bishops!” *C'est une autre affaire, Monsieur.* That is another point. We admit the premises here stated, but deny the conclusion. Timothy and Titus could do all these things without being diocesan Bishops. An apostle could do them in virtue of his apostolic office: an evangelist, as Timothy, and consequently, Titus, undoubtedly was,\* could do them in virtue of his office *as an evangelist*; and yet be very unlike a diocesan bishop. And to infer that Timothy and Titus were bishops in the prelatical sense of the term, because they enjoyed a pre-eminence and an authority which they might enjoy *without being such bishops at all*, is to abuse the understanding of the reader. Our opponent ought to prove not only that they exer-

\* 2 *Tim.* iv. 5 “Do the work of an EVANGELIST.”

cised the powers enumerated, but that they did so as *ordinary officers in whom a precedent was set for the future government of the church*. He must prove that their powers were not an appendage of their *special and extraordinary character*, like the powers peculiar to the apostolic character. This he neither has done, nor is able to do : and thus the boasted demonstration of Episcopacy from the history of Timothy and Titus, is a mere begging of the question—taking for granted the very thing in dispute.

Let us apply this all conquering argument to other cases which appear to be perfectly parallel.

*Episcopal argument.*

Titus ordained elders in every city—*Therefore* Titus was Bishop of Crete.

*Parallelism.*

Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every church, to wit, in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, at least\*—*Therefore* Paul and Barnabas were joint Bishops of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch.

*Episcopal argument.*

Timothy instructed and charged the Ephesian elders—*Therefore* he was Bishop of Ephesus !

*Parallelism.*

Paul instructed and charged the Ephesian elders†—*Therefore* PAUL was Bishop of Ephesus.

\* *Act.* xiv. 20, 21, 23.

† *Act.* xx. 17, &c.

*Episcopal argument.*

Timothy had power to inflict censure on Presbyters, and even to excommunicate heretics—*Therefore* Timothy was Bishop of Ephesus.

*Parallelism.*

Paul had power to excommunicate offenders in the Corinthian church\*—*Therefore* Paul was Bishop of Corinth.

The parallel might be run further : but the foregoing will evince, that the very same mode of reasoning which proves Timothy to have been Bishop of Ephesus, and Titus of Crete, will also prove every one of the Apostles to have been bishop of every place where he exercised any of those functions which the Episcopal church has restrained to her prelates. This her advocates know to be absurd; and so does all the world beside. And yet let them show, if they can, that our argument for the diocesan *ubiquity* of the apostles, is not fully as fair and as conclusive as their own for the bishopricks of Timothy and Titus; and is not founded on the very same principles.

There is nothing else in the Layman or Cyprian, which has even the shadow of an argument, unless it be such suggestions as these :

“ Will it be imagined by any reasonable man, that St. Paul had converted so many cities on this island,” (Crete,) “ with-

\* 1 Cor. v. 5.

out having ordained any elders amongst them ? What ! when it was his uniform and invariable practice to ordain elders in every country in which he made proselytes ? What ! could he have neglected to ordain those amongst them who were absolutely necessary to transact the affairs of the church in his absence ? Would he have left the work he had begun only half performed ?”\*

Cyprian sets himself down in his study at Albany, and, knowing infinitely more than any author sacred or profane has told him, first determines what the Apostle *ought to have done* seventeen hundred and fifty years ago in Crete : next, very wisely concludes that Paul, being also a wise man, *actually did* as he, Cyprian, has laid down and determined ; then, furnishes the churches of Crete with Presbyters ; and, wanting still more, manufactures Titus into a Bishop to supply the deficiency. Excellent ! But where did Cyprian get his facts ? Where did he learn so positively what was Paul’s “ uniform and invariable practice,” in the article of ordination ? He ought to have been cautious of affronting his old guide, whose account of Paul’s “ practice,” is entirely different from his own.

“ One qualification for a Bishop was, that he should not be (*Νεοφύτος*) a novice ; that is, one newly converted ; time being required to prove men before they could be intrusted with the care of the church. And therefore the Apostles *used not to ordain ministers in any place before the SECOND time of their coming thither*—Sometimes, when they

had no prospect of returning, they gave others a commission to ordain ministers. For which reason Titus was left in Crete by St. Paul to *ordain ministers in all cities*. But there will scarce be found *any instance* of their ordaining ministers at the *first time* of their coming to any place.”\*

It was rather bold in Cyprian to chastise the Archbishop of Canterbury, whom on other occasions he so implicitly follows, for being ignorant of Paul’s “uniform and invariable practice:” but there is something bolder behind: for, if we mistake not, the rector’s rod has reached the back of the Apostle himself. He broadly insinuates, that Paul could not, without culpable negligence, have omitted to create officers who were necessary to transact the affairs of the church in his absence; and that had he done so, he would have left his work only half performed. Now it so happens that Paul, according to his own testimony, *did not* furnish the churches in Crete with the requisite officers, or else he left Titus to ordain such as were not absolutely necessary—he did actually leave the work he had begun unfinished; whether only “half performed,” or one third, or two thirds, he does not say; but so much was undone as to demand the stay of Titus to complete it. The express terms of his commission are, “That thou shouldest set in order the *things that are wanting*.” or, as the margin of our English version has it, the

\* POTTER. *Discourse on Church Government*, p. 101, 102.



things that are "*left undone*,"\* and one of these things, as the very next words indicate, was the ordination of Presbyters—"and ordain Elders in every city." Cyprian's assumption, therefore, that Paul ordained Presbyters in Crete, is without a particle of evidence. There is not a syllable in the whole narrative, from which we can infer that there was a single Presbyter in the island at his departure. The contrary inference is much the more natural. If Titus was instructed to ordain Presbyters in every city, the presumption is, that none had been ordained hitherto. For, to turn the edge of Cyprian's weapon against himself, it is very improbable that the Apostle in organizing the several churches, would *begin* to ordain Presbyters; would stop in the middle of his business; hie off to another place; do the same sort of half work there; and so from city to city; and then send Titus upon a travelling tour to compensate for the deficiencies occasioned by his haste, his negligence, or his whim. But so it is. Titus *shall* be Bishop of Crete. The proof of his title will fail if there be no Presbyters there—Well, then, there *shall be* Presbyters there, or else Paul shall be convicted of neglecting his duty:—But Paul did not neglect his duty; therefore there *were* Presbyters in Crete when he left it; therefore Titus was a Bishop. Excellently well reasoned, Mr. Rector! And so—"Fair play," interrupts an

Episcopal voice, "it does not follow from the representation of Cyprian, that Paul ordained *some* elders in every city; and left Titus to ordain the rest. His words will bear another meaning: viz. that the full complement of Presbyters were ordained in some cities, but none at all in others: and that Titus was directed to ordain in these, which would not have been necessary, had Presbyters possessed the power of ordination: seeing that those of one district might have ordained for another, as is done at this day by the Presbyterians. And so, Mr. Reviewer, you are still in the wrong, and Titus *is* a Bishop."

Not *yet*, if you please, dear Sir. Allowing your premises, your conclusion is not good. The Presbyters newly ordained had abundance of occupation, with very little experience. A proper choice of officers in the first instance was all important to the infant churches. Titus had superior qualifications for making a wise selection; he could also resolve many difficulties which might have been too hard for others. He was deputed by the Apostle to set every thing in order through the island, that when he should be gone the stated officers might have less trouble. In ordaining Presbyters he was doing the work of an Evangelist. The churches were organized in the best manner, and with the greatest expedition; while the Presbyters were permitted to superintend, without distraction, the flocks just committed to

their care. There is no example of the Apostle's calling away Presbyters from their charges immediately after their erection, and sending them round the country to ordain others. This was the *appropriate employment of the apostles themselves, and their assistants, the evangelists*. They established the evangelical order, and consigned it to the ordinary ministry. Presbyters, therefore, might have been ordained in some cities, (although this is a mere supposition;) Titus might, notwithstanding, ordain others in the remaining cities, and yet not be Bishop of Crete. And certainly if *his* ordaining some elders proves *him* to have been Bishop of that island; *Paul's* ordaining some, proves *him also* to have been her Bishop.

Having exposed the weakness and vanity of the argument drawn for diocesan Episcopacy from the examples of Timothy and Titus, we might rest the cause here: but we advance a step further, and offer, what no laws of discussion exact from us, to establish the negative. That is, the proof, as we have manifested, that they *were* such Bishops, having miserably failed, we shall assign reasons for our conviction that they *were not*.

1. The very terms of their commission favour us.

What does Paul say? That he gave Ephesus to Timothy, and Crete to Titus, as their regular and permanent charges? No: nothing like it. The former staid, at the Apostle's request, to resist the inroads of false doctrine, which had begun to in-

fect some of the public teachers. The latter to finish the organization of the churches begun by the Apostle himself. Each, then, had a specific charge, relating not to the government of *settled* churches, but to their *preparation* for it; or to the correction of abuses for restoring and preserving their purity. In both cases the charge was temporary. Paul seized these occasions to furnish his substitutes with written directions containing a manual of general instruction to them, and through them to the future ministry; and, with such an object in view, it was perfectly natural for him to compress into his instructions so great a compass of matter.

2. Paul's mode of addressing Timothy implies that Ephesus was not his peculiar charge. I BE-  
SOUGHT *thee*, says he, *to abide still at Ephesus*. A strange formula of appointment to a man's proper station! it carries a strong and evident implication, that Timothy remained there not because it was his diocese, but to gratify the apostle by attending to the exigencies of the public service. It bespeaks reluctance in Timothy to stay behind; Paul had to *entreat* him. All which, again, is entirely natural upon the supposition of his being the apostle's *companion and assistant in planting churches*: but offensive and monstrous upon the supposition of his being bishop of Ephesus.

“For why,” says DAILLE', *beseech* a Bishop to “remain in his diocese? Is it not to beseech a

man to stay in a place to which he is bound? I should not think it strange to beseech him to leave it, if his service were needed elsewhere. But to beseech him to abide in a place where his charge obliges him to be, and which he cannot forsake without offending God and neglecting his duty, is, to say the truth, not a very civil entreaty; as it plainly presupposes that he has not his duty much at heart, seeing one is under the necessity of *beseeching* him to do it.”\*

This is the language of good sense—No squeezing; no twisting; no forcing; all which the hierarchy must do when she puts into the mouth of Paul such an awkward, bungling speech as, *I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus*;—for—“I constituted thee bishop of Ephesus.” We shall, however, suggest an improvement, for which we look for the benedictions of some gentlemen in lawn; viz. That Timothy being Bishop of Ephesus, and relishing confinement to his charge so little as to lay the Apostle under a necessity of *beseeching* him to stay in it, affords the best possible precedent and plea for priests and Bishops who had rather be detected any where than in their parishes and dioceses—except—at tything time.

3. “If Timothy was bishop of Ephesus, it must be when the first epistle was written. For it is in that epistle in which he is said to receive his pretended charge of exercising his Episcopal power

\* DAILLE', *ci-dessus*, p. 23.

in ordination and jurisdiction. But now this first epistle was written when Paul was at Macedonia, as the learned, both new and old, Papists and Protestants, agree. And it was after this when Paul came to Miletum accompanied with Timothy, and sends for the elders of the Church of Ephesus unto him, and commends the government of the Church unto these Elders, whom he calls Bishops. Now surely if Timothy had been constituted their Bishop, (in the sense of our adversaries,) the Apostle would not have called the elders Bishops before their Bishop's face, and instead of giving a charge to the Elders to feed the flock of Christ, he would have given that charge to Timothy, and not to them: and no doubt he would have given some directions to the Elders how to carry themselves towards their Bishop. And because none of these things were done, it is a clear demonstration to us, that Timothy was not at that time Bishop of Ephesus.

“To avoid the force of this argument, there are some that say, that Timothy was not made Bishop of Ephesus till after Paul's first being a prisoner at Rome, which was after his being at Miletum. But these men, while they seek to avoid the *Scylla* of one inconvenience, fall into the *Charybdis* of another as great. For if Timothy was not made Bishop till Paul's first being at Rome, then he was not Bishop when the first Epistle was written to him (which all agree to be written before that

time.) And then it will also follow, that all that charge that was laid upon him, both of ordination and jurisdiction, and that entreating of him to abide at Ephesus, was given to him not as to the Bishop of Ephesus, (which he was not,) but as to an extraordinary officer, sent thither upon special occasion, with a purpose of returning when his work imposed was finished. From both these considerations we may safely conclude,

“That if Timothy were neither constituted Bishop of Ephesus before Paul’s first being prisoner at Rome, nor after; then he was not constituted Bishop at all. But he was neither constituted Bishop before nor after, &c. *Ergo*, not at all.”\*

By this time we trust the reader is satisfied that Timothy was not Bishop of Ephesus; and, as it is agreed that his functions and those of Titus were alike, the conclusion is, that the latter was not Bishop of Crete. What were they then? We answer, they were *extraordinary officers, known in the Apostolic church by the name of* EVANGELISTS; *and employed as travelling companions and assistants of the Apostles, in propagating the gospel.*

For this purpose their powers, like those of the Apostles, were extraordinary; their office too was temporary; and therefore their superiority over Presbyters is no precedent nor warrant for retaining such superiority in the permanent order of the

\* *Jus divinum ministerii Anglicani.* p. 65, 66 4to. 1654.

church. That such was the nature of the office of an evangelist, we have testimony which our Episcopal brethren will not dispute—the testimony of bishop *Eusebius*.

This celebrated historian tells us, that even in the second century there were disciples of the apostles, “who every where built upon the foundations which the apostles had laid: preaching the gospel, and scattering the salutary seeds of the kingdom of heaven over the face of the earth. And, moreover, very many of the disciples of that day travelled abroad, and performed *the work of* EVANGELISTS; ardently ambitious of preaching Christ to those who were yet wholly unacquainted with the doctrine of faith, and to deliver to them the scripture of the divine gospels. *These, having merely laid the foundations of the faith, and* ORDAINED OTHER PASTORS, *committed to them the cultivation of the churches newly planted; while they themselves, supported by the grace and co-operation of God, proceeded to* OTHER COUNTRIES AND NATIONS. For even then, many astonishing miracles of the divine spirit were wrought by them.”\*

Eusebius has used the very expression of Paul to Timothy, viz. *the work of an evangelist*; and if the reader compare his description of that work with the epistles to Timothy and Titus, and with their history as it may be gathered from the New Testament, he will perceive the most exact ac-

\* EUSEBIUS, *His. Eccles.* Lib. 111. c. 37. ed. Reading, T. 1. p. 133.



cordance. That is, he will perceive the work of an evangelist, like the work of an apostle, to have been altogether extraordinary and temporary.

Paul took up Timothy at Lystra,\* according to the chronology of our bibles, in the year of Christ, 52. He accompanied the apostle in his travels; for at the close of the next year, 53, he was with him at Berea, and staid there when Paul was sent away by the brethren.† By the persons who conducted Paul he received a message to come to him at Athens; but did not join him, as appears, till he was at Corinth,‡ the year after, 54. The next two years he made a part of the apostle's retinue; was with him when he wrote both his Epistles to the Thessalonians;|| and, at the close of that period, was sent, with Erastus, into Macedonia, *anno* 56.§ Three years after he was despatched to Corinth:¶ and the next, *anno* 60, had returned, and was with Paul when he wrote his second Epistle to the church in that city.\*\* He was one of the seven distinguished personages who composed the apostle's train that same year, when he left Greece and went into Asia.

It was in this very journey that Paul sent for the elders of Ephesus to Miletum, and laid upon them that solemn charge to feed the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers.††

\* Act. xvi. 1—4.

† Act. xviii. 5.

§ Act. xix. 1. 10. 22.

\*\* 2 Cor. i. 1.

† xvii. 14.

|| 1 Thess. i. 1. 2 Thess. i. 1.

¶ 1 Cor. iv. 17.

†† xx. 28.

Timothy was there,\* and if Bishop of Ephesus at all, must have been appointed either then or before. For as Paul never saw the Ephesian brethren afterwards,† he never had afterwards an opportunity of ordaining a Bishop over them. If Timothy were their diocesan already, he had been very little with them, as the narrative evinces. And is it not strange that the whole of the apostle's charge should be addressed to the Presbyters, and not a syllable to their Bishop, nor to them on their duty to him? On the other hand, if he was *then* ordained to his see, is not the silence of Paul on the subject of their mutual duties equally mysterious? That he should address them as having the *oversight* of the flock; when the fact was that it belonged not to them but to Timothy, and should do this to their Bishop's face without recognizing his pre-eminence in the most distant manner?

They who can swallow all this, when they are boasting of the scriptural evidence that Timothy was Bishop of Ephesus, have a most happy knack at self-persuasion! We own that our credulity does not contain a passage for so large a camel!

But let us see what becomes of Timothy. Whether he constantly attached himself afterwards to the person of Paul we know not; but we do know that he was with him when a prisoner at Rome, *anno* 64, and shared in his bonds.‡

Let any sober man look at this itinerant life of

\* 2 Cor. v. 5. 13.

† v. 25. 38.

‡ Heb. xiii. 23.

Timothy, and ask whether his occupations resembled those of a diocesan Bishop? Whether there is even the shadow of a presumption that he had a fixed charge? And whether there is not just as good evidence of his being Bishop of Berea, of Corinth, or of Thessalonica, as of Ephesus?

Titus is in the same situation. In the first chapter of Paul's epistle to him, the object of his stay at Crete is specified. The last chapter declares it to have been temporary; for Paul mentions his design of sending another to take his place; directs him to come without delay to him at Nicopolis; and to bring with him Zenas and Apollos.\* Whence, by the way, it is clear that Titus had coadjutors in Crete. For Apollos was an eloquent preacher of the gospel; and in estimation near the apostles themselves.†

On this point, the INQUIRER, in the collection under review, p. 132, had asked,

“ Since Paul sent for Titus, after he had “ set in order the things that were wanting,” to come to Nicopolis, took him along with him to Rome, and then sent him into Dalmatia, may not Titus be properly called an *Evangelist*; or a *traveling* rather than a *diocesan* Bishop?”

A very reasonable and modest question, one would think. But Dr. Hobart, in his note, calls upon Bishop Hoadley to shut the mouth of the Inquirer.

“ Let Bishop HOADLEY answer this inquiry, and silence the only objection which the anti-Episcopalians can bring against the evident superiority of Timothy and Titus over the other

\* Tit. iii. 12, 13.

† 1 Cor. i. 12. ii. 6.

orders at Ephesus and Crete, that they were *extraordinary of ficers, Evangelists, travelling Bishops*. ‘It is of small importance whether *Timothy* and *Titus* were *fixed Bishops*, properly so called or not. Perhaps at the first plantation of *churches* there was no such necessity of *fixed Bishops* as was found afterwards; or perhaps at first the superintendency of such persons as *Timothy* and *Titus* was thought requisite in many different churches, as their several needs required. If so, their office certainly was the same in all *churches* to which they went; and *ordination* a work reserved to such as they were, persons superior to the settled *Presbyters*. But as to *Ephesus* and *Crete*, it is manifest that *Timothy* and *Titus* were to stay with the *churches* there, as long as their presence was not more wanted at other places: And, besides, if they did leave these churches, there was as good reason that they should return to them to perform the same office of *ordination* when there was again occasion, as there was at first, why they should be sent by St. Paul to that purpose. Nor is there the least footstep in all antiquity, as far as it hath yet appeared, of any attempt in the *Presbyters* of *Ephesus* or *Crete*, to take to themselves the *offices* appropriated in the forementioned *Epistles*, to a superior order of men.’ *Hoadley’s Def. of Episc.* ch. i.--*Ed.*”

The anti-Episcopalians do not, so far as we understand them, deny the “superiority of Timothy and Titus over the other orders at Ephesus and Crete.” But they deny the *inferences* which the *jure divino* prelatists draw from that superiority, viz. 1. *therefore*, Timothy was Bishop of Ephesus, and Titus of Crete; and 2. *therefore* Diocesan Episcopacy is of apostolic institution. These things they deny. They contend that a ministry extraordinary and temporary cannot be a rule for a ministry which is ordinary and permanent—that

functions which, like those of the apostles and evangelists, admitted of no fixed charges, cannot be a model for a system of fixed charges, as diocesan Episcopacy undoubtedly is—that the method pursued in *founding* churches is no precedent for *governing* them when *founded*. It would be, in their estimation, quite as fair and as reasonable, to infer the form of government prescribed for a conquered country, from the measures adopted by the invaders for effecting and completing the conquest. Or to deduce the powers and jurisdiction of the different departments in a civil constitution, from the powers of those who set it up. This would be most fallacious reasoning; and the whole world would agree in rejecting it as not only false but extremely dangerous. Yet it is precisely the fallacy of the Episcopal reasoning from the powers of Timothy and Titus to those of ordinary rulers in the church. No. When we inquire who are the fixed officers, and what is the fixed order of the church? we must inquire, not what apostles and evangelists did in executing their peculiar trust; but what officers and order *they fixed in the churches planted by their care*. This, and this alone, can be our pattern. In the history of their proceedings we have the most incontestable evidence of their ordaining Presbyters in fixed charges. But we challenge all the advocates for Episcopacy to produce a *single example* of their assigning a fixed charge to any officer above a

Presbyter; or of their exercising, without immediate inspiration in any settled church, a *single act of power which they refused to Presbyters*. When Hoadley tells us that fixed charges might not be so necessary in those days as afterwards, he confesses his inability to prove either that Timothy and Titus were diocesan bishops; or that diocesan Episcopacy has an apostolic sanction. For if it were not, as a system of fixed charges, necessary *then*, the apostles did not then establish it. If they did not *then* establish it, they *never* established it at all; for it cannot be pretended that they left instructions for its introduction afterwards. And if it was not *then* instituted, we reject its claim; if not *then* necessary, we must have better authority than the prelates themselves to satisfy us that it has been necessary at any period since. Hoadley, therefore, with his *ifs* and *perhaps*, instead of silencing our objection, has confirmed it. We *drove* the nail, and my lord of Winchester has most obligingly *clenched* it. Dr. Hobart has our permission to draw it at his leisure.

We finish this scriptural view with observing, that whatever may be the difficulty of Dr. Bowden, *we* can see prelates in England without going to Ephesus or Crete for spectacles: and that if no more of prelacy had prevailed in the one, than the scriptures show to have existed in the other, it had been infinitely better, at this day, for the most precious interests of Old England.

In an early stage of this review, we joined issue with our Episcopal brethren upon a proposition of the Layman, viz. "The question of Episcopacy is a question of fact, to be determined by a sound interpretation of the sacred volume." We not only consented, but insisted, that the question should be decided by the scripture alone.\* We closed the scriptural argument in our last number, and therefore, have closed the argument upon the merits of the case. God's own word *must* contain the law of his own house. The idea cannot be admitted for a single moment, that those master-principles, without which there could be no Christian order, nor any system of instituted worship, are left unsettled in the rule of faith. Whatever is to govern our consciences must have its foundation here, and a foundation deep and strong. We think we have demonstrated that the Episcopal claim has no such foundation. *Who* set up the hierarchy, is a question not worth the expense of a thought, seeing God has not appointed it in his word. When we follow its advocates to the ground of ecclesiastical history, we yield them a courtesy which they have no right to expect. The instant we cross the line of inspiration, we are out of the territory where the only rightful tribunal is erected, and where alone we shall permit ourselves to be tried.

However, as the argument which prelacy de-

\* See page 39.

rives from the testimony of the fathers, is in truth her best argument ; let us pay it the compliment of an examination. Thus she states it from the mouth of a bishop :

“ Is it not reasonable to suppose that the primitive Fathers of the church must have been well acquainted with the mode of ecclesiastical government established by Christ and his apostles ? Now, *their* testimony is *universally* in our favour. What course, then, have the enemies of Episcopacy for the most part pursued ? Why, they have endeavoured by every art of misrepresentation to invalidate this testimony of the Fathers. Ignatius was born before the death of St. John. Seven of his Epistles have been proved by Bishop Pearson to be genuine, to the satisfaction of the whole learned world. In these Epistles he repeatedly mentions the three orders of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, and speaks of the order of Bishops as necessary in the constitution of every Christian church. All this has been done ; and still, the Presbyterian teachers mislead the people, by artfully insinuating that none of the writings are genuine which go under the name of Ignatius. Another artful method pursued by our opponents is to collect all the errors into which the Fathers have fallen, with respect to particular points of doctrine ; to paint these errors in the blackest colours ; and when they have thus prejudiced the minds of the people against them, boldly to go on to the preposterous conclusion, that the testimony of these Fathers is not to be regarded when they stand forth as witnesses to a matter of fact. But is this fair dealing ? May not a man of sincerity and truth be liable to errors, as to matters of opinion ; and still be a true witness, as to things which he has seen and heard ?

“ Pursuing the usual mode of *artful misrepresentation*, our Miscellanist has endeavoured to represent Jerome as favouring the Presbyterian scheme of church government ; and with the



same spirit, he abuses the church of England as too nearly bordering on Popery. After seeing what has been published on these subjects, if your opponent has any spark of modesty remaining in his bosom, he will never produce the testimony of Jerome in support of his cause.”\*

Thus, from the mouth of a priest :

“ Here let me appeal to the common sense of every unprejudiced reader, to bear witness to the truth of the following proposition.

“ If we had only obscure hints given us in scripture of the institution of this form of government by the Apostles, and if at a very early period—as soon as any distinct mention is at all made of the subject, this appears to be the only form of government existing in the church, have we not the strongest possible presumption, have we not absolute demonstration, that it was of Apostolic original ? Who were so likely to be acquainted with the intentions, with the practices, with the institutions of the Apostles, as their *immediate successors* ? If, then, we should admit for a moment, (and really it is almost too great an outrage against sound reasoning, to be admitted even for a moment ; ) I say, if we should admit, for the sake of argument, that “ the Classieal or Presbyterial form of church government was instituted by Christ and his Apostles,” at what period was the *Episcopal* introduced ? When did this monstous innovation upon primitive order find its way into the church of Christ ? At what period did the Bishops make the bold and successful attempt of exalting themselves into “ lords in God’s heritage.” These are questions which the advocates of parity have never yet been able to answer, which they never will be able to answer. They tell us, indeed, of a change that must have taken place at an early period, that Episcopacy is a corrupt innovation ; but they can produce no proof on which to ground these bold assertions. They are countenanced, in these as-

† CORNELIUS. *Collec.* p. 135.

sertions, by none of the records of these times that have been transmitted to us. It is a mere conjecture, a creature of the imagination. It is conjectured that this change took place immediately after the Apostolic age. It must be that this change took place, or Presbyterian principles cannot be maintained. Thus a mere *conjecture* on their part is to overbalance the most solid and substantial *proofs* on ours. In order to follow these ærial adventurers in their excursions, we are to desert the broad and solid bottom of facts, and launch into the regions of hypothesis and uncertainty.

“ We say, then, and I hope it will be well remembered, that from the *earliest* information which is given us concerning the institutions and usages of the Christian church, it undeniably appears, that there existed in it the three distinct orders of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons. We say, that this circumstance amounts to demonstrative evidence, that these three orders were of divine institution—were of Apostolic appointment.”—“ But we do not stop here. We maintain that to suppose the form of government in the church of Christ to have been so fundamentally altered at this time, is the wildest imagination that ever entered into the head of man. Let us contemplate the circumstances of this case.

“ It is *supposed* that Christ and his Apostles instituted originally but one order of ministers in his church, equal in dignity and authority. It is *imagined*, that immediately after their death, a number of aspiring individuals abolished this primitive arrangement, elevated themselves to supreme authority in the church of Christ. Concerning the *time* at which this innovation was effected, the advocates of Presbyterianism are by no means agreed. The most learned among them, however, admit that it must have taken place before the middle of the second century, about *forty or fifty years after the times of the Apostles*. BLONDEL allows that Episcopacy was the established government of the church within forty years after the Apostolic age. BOCHART assigns as the period of its

origin, the age that immediately succeeded the Apostles. He says it arose, *paulo post Apostolos*. SALMASIUS even allows that this government prevailed in the church before the death of the last of the Apostles. And, in fact, this is the only period at which it can be supposed to have originated with any degree of plausibility. It shall be my task to show that it is altogether *improbable*, that it is almost *impossible*, that any innovation upon primitive order and discipline could have been effectuated at this early period.

“ Within forty years after the times of the Apostles, we are told, that the Bishops, by a bold and successful effort, trampled upon the rights and privileges of the Clergy, and elevated themselves to the chair of supreme authority ! What ! Those who were the immediate successors of the Apostles—those who had received from these miraculous men the words of eternal truth, the institutions of God’s own appointment—so soon forget the reverence and duty which they owed them—so soon, with a rash and impious hand, strike away the foundation of those venerable structures which they had erected ! Would they not permit the Apostles to be cold in their graves before they began to undermine and demolish their sacred establishments ? Would such iniquitous proceedings have been possible with men who exhibited, on all occasions, the warmest attachment to their Saviour, and to all his institutions ? Will it be imagined that the good IGNATIUS, the venerable Bishop of Antioch, he who triumphantly avowed that he disregarded the pains of martyrdom, so that he could but attain to the presence of Jesus Christ—will it be imagined that he entered into a conspiracy to overthrow that government which his Saviour had established in his church ? Would the illustrious POLYCARP, the pride and ornament of the churches of Asia, have engaged in the execution of so foul an enterprise—he, who, when commanded to blaspheme Christ, exclaimed, “ Four-score and six years have I served him, and he never did me any harm ; how, then, shall I blaspheme my King

and my Saviour?" In short, can all the pious Fathers that succeeded these, be supposed to have co-operated in perfecting the atrocious work which they had begun? These things will not be credited.

"But even supposing that these pious men, whose meek and unassuming temper renders it altogether incredible that they made any such sacrilegious attempt, were inclined to obtain this pre-eminence in the church; can it be imagined, that the remaining *Presbyters* would have *witnessed* these daring *usurpations* with *indifference*? Would they have made no effort to save themselves and their brethren from the control of so undue and illegitimate an authority? Could none be found amongst them possessed of so much zeal in the service of their divine master, so ardently attached to his holy institutions, as to induce them to resist such a bold and impious attempt? In short, would not such an attempt by a few *Presbyters*, according to the uniform course of things, necessarily have agitated and convulsed the church? Would not the period of such an innovation have become a marked and peculiar era in her existence? Can the advocates of parity show any thing in the history of man analagous to their supposed change in ecclesiastical government at this time? Could ever such a radical and important alteration have been produced in any government, civil or ecclesiastical, without being accompanied by violence and convulsion? We find that the congregations, at this time, were extremely jealous of the authority that was exercised over them. This jealousy made its appearance even during the times of the Apostles. Some took it upon themselves to call in question the authority of St. Paul, others that of St. John. From the Epistle of Clemens to the Corinthians, it would seem as if some disorders had arisen amongst them from a similar source. Is it to be supposed then that any number of *Presbyters* would have dared, would have proved successful had they dared, to endeavour to accumulate in their hands such undue authority as that which was

claimed by Bishops? And even if we should allow that a few Presbyters might in some places have had the talents and address to elevate themselves to this superiority over their brethren, is it probable, is it possible, that this took place at the *same time* over the universal church? Can such a singular coincidence of circumstances be reasonably imagined? The church had, at this time, widely extended herself over the Roman empire. Did, then, the churches of Africa, of Asia, of Europe, by a miraculous unanimity of opinion, enter at the *same moment* into the determination to change their form of government from the Presbyterial to the Episcopal? I will not do so much discredit to the understanding of any reader as to imagine that he does not at once perceive the inadmissibility and the absurdity of such a supposition.

“Let us, however, suppose the most that our adversaries can desire. Let us suppose that the primitive rulers of the church were destitute of principle. Let us suppose them devoid of attachment to the institutions of Christ. Let us suppose that they waited every opportunity to promote their own aggrandizement. Let us suppose the difficulties removed that opposed them in their ascent towards the chair of Episcopal authority. What was there, at this period, in the office of Bishop to excite their desires, or to invite their exertions to obtain it? The veneration attached to it, as yet, extended no farther than to the family of the faithful. The church was on all hands encountered by the bitterest enemies. By elevating themselves, therefore, to the pre-eminence of Bishops, they only raised themselves to pre-eminence in difficulties, in dangers, in deaths. Their blood was always the first that was drunk by the sword of persecution. Their station only exposed them to more certain and more horrid deaths. Was an office of this kind an object of cupidity? Is it to be supposed that great exertions would be made, many difficulties encountered, to obtain it? But I need say no more on this part of the subject.

“ The idea that an alteration took place at this time in the form of government originally established in the church of Christ, is altogether unsupported by any proof.

“ It is proved to be unfounded by unnumbered considerations.”\*

After hearing the bishop and the priest, let us hear also the Layman :

“ Calvin found the whole Christian world in possession of the Episcopal form of government. The most learned supporters of the opposite doctrine scruple not to admit that Bishops existed, universally, in the church, as distinct from, and superior to, Presbyters, within forty or fifty years after the last of the Apostles. Such is the concession of *Blondel*, of *Salmasius*, of *Bochartus*, of *Baxter*, of *Doddridge*. Some of them, indeed, carry it up to a much earlier period ; *Salmasius* going so far as to admit that Episcopacy prevailed shortly after the martyrdom of Paul and Peter, and long before the death of St. John.

“ It is surely incumbent on those who advocate a form of government admitted to be thus *new*, and thus opposed to the *early, universal, and uninterrupted* practice of the church, to give us the most convincing and unequivocal proof of the divinity of their system. More especially when it is recollected that they can produce no record of a change ; but are obliged to *imagine* one, in opposition to the uniform testimony of the primitive fathers of the church. The age in which they suppose a change to have taken place was a learned age, abounding in authors of the first eminence. The most minute events are recorded, and yet not a word is said of the revolution, which some men talk of, so fundamental in its nature, and so interesting in its consequences. The change, too, which they imagine, must have been both *instantaneous* and *universal* ; and this at a time when there were no Christian princes to

\* CYPRIAN, No. V. *Collec.* p 144—147.

promote it; when no general council had met, or could meet to establish it; and when the fury of persecution cut off all intercourse between distant churches; leaving their Clergy, also, something else to attend to than projects of usurpation. Such are the strange and almost incredible absurdities into which men will run, rather than give up a system to which they have become wedded by education and by habit.”\*

The sum of the foregoing argument is this :

“Immediately after the death of the apostles the *whole Christian world* was Episcopal, and remained so, without interruption, or question, for fifteen hundred years—that no cause short of Apostolic institution, can, with any show of reason, be assigned for such an effect—that it is absurd to suppose a sudden, universal, and successful conspiracy, to change the primitive order of the church—and therefore, that Episcopacy is, at least, of apostolic origin.”

Contracted into a more regular form, the argument stands thus :

That order which the church universal possessed at, or shortly after, the death of the apostles, is the order which they established and left :

But the order of the church universal, at, or shortly after the death of the apostles, was Episcopal :

Therefore, Episcopacy is the order established by the Apostles.

This reasoning appears, at first sight, to be conclusive. It certainly ought to be so, considering

\* LAYMAN, No. VII. *Collec.* p. 99.

the interests which depend upon it, and the triumph with which it is brought forward. Nevertheless, we more than suspect a fallacy in the reasoning itself, and an error in the assumption upon which it confessedly relies.

Supposing the fact to have been, as our Episcopal friends say it was, viz. that the accounts of the state of the Christian church after the death of the apostles, represent her, without an exception, as under Episcopal organization, we should still impeach the conclusion that Episcopacy was established by the apostles. We acknowledge, that, upon our principles, the phenomenon would be extraordinary, and the difficulty great. So great, that did there exist no other records of the first constitution of the church, than the testimony of the primitive fathers; and did this testimony declare her to have been Episcopal, as that term is now understood, there could be, in our apprehension, no dispute about the matter. Common sense would instruct us to decide according to the best evidence we could get: that evidence would be altogether in favour of the Episcopal claim, which, therefore, no man in his senses, would think of disputing. We say, such would be the result *were the testimony of the fathers correctly stated* by the hierarchy; and *had we no other documents or records* to consult. But we have other and better testimony than that of the Fathers. We have the testimony of the Apostles themselves: We have



their own authentic records : We have the very instrument in which the ascended Head of the church has written her *whole charter* with the finger of his unerring Spirit : We have the New Testament. This charter we have examined. We have minutely discussed the parts upon which our opponents rely : we have compared them with other parts of the same instrument, and we have proved that Episcopacy is *not there*. Admitting then, what, however, we do not admit, that the testimony of the fathers to Episcopacy is precise and full, it would be nothing to us. They must testify one of two things ; either that the plan of the hierarchy is laid down in the New Testament ; or simply that it existed in their days. The former would refer to the written word which we can understand as well as themselves, if not much better ; so that we should not take their assertion for our interpretation. The latter could only furnish us with a subject worthy of investigation ; but could not be a solid foundation for so splendid and ponderous a superstructure as the Episcopal hierarchy. Were the language of the New Testament ambiguous throughout : did it contain no internal principles of satisfactory exposition : were it, (which would render it a miraculous equivocal,) were it *equally* adapted to an Episcopal, or an Anti-episcopal, order ; in this event, too, the testimony of the fathers would turn the balance. But as neither its language nor its facts can be made,

without negligence or violence, to accord with the institutions of the hierarchy, she is not at liberty to set off the testimony of the fathers against that of the scripture; and to *infer* that she is of apostolical extraction, merely because she was found in being after her pretended spiritual progenitors were dead. It never can be tolerated as sound reasoning to determine the meaning of a law from certain observances which are to be tried by the law itself; and, by *inference from extraneous facts*, to establish, as law, a point which the law does not acknowledge. A question is at issue, whether Episcopacy is of apostolic authority or not. The law of God's house, penned by the apostles themselves, is produced; and the verdict, upon trial, is for the negative. The Episcopal counsel appeals to the Fathers; they depose, he says, that Episcopacy was in actual existence, throughout the Christian community, a little while after the death of the Apostles; and he insists that this fact shall regulate the construction of the Christian law

“By no means;” replies the counsel on the other side. “We accuse Episcopacy of *corrupting* the Christian institutions; and her counsel pleads the *early existence* of her alleged crime, as a proof of her having conformed to the will of the Law-giver; and that the fact of her having committed it from nearly the time of promulging the law, is a demonstration that the law not only allows but enjoins the deed!!”

The United States are a republic, with a single executive periodically chosen. Suppose that three hundred years hence they should be under the reign of a hereditary monarch ; and the question should then be started whether this was the original order or not? Those who favour the negative go back to the written constitution, framed in 1787, and show that a hereditary monarchy was never contemplated in that instrument. Others contend that “ The expressions of the constitution are indefinite ; there are some things, indeed, which look a little republican-like, and might be accommodated to the infant state of the nation ; but whoever shall consider the *purposes* of the order therein prescribed, and the nature of the *powers* therein granted, will clearly perceive that the one cannot be attained, nor the other exercised, but in a hereditary monarchy.” Well, the constitution is produced ; it is examined again and again ; but no hereditary monarchy is recognized there ; it breathes republicanism throughout : What, now, would be thought of a man, who should gravely answer, “ The concurrent testimony of all the historians of those times is, that at, or very shortly after, the death of the members of the convention of 1787, monarchy prevailed throughout the United States ; and this is proof positive, that it was established by the convention.”

“ Nay,” would the first rejoin, “ your facts are

of no avail. The question is, not what prevailed *after* the constitution was adopted : but what is the constitution itself? There it is : let it argue its own cause."

"But," says the other, "how could so great a change, as that from a republic to a monarchy, happen in so short a time? and that without resistance, or, what is still more astonishing, without notice?"

"You may settle that," retorts the first, "at your leisure. That there has been a material change, I see as clearly as the light: *how* that change was effected, is none of my concern. It is enough for me that the constitution, fairly interpreted, knows nothing of the existing monarchy."

Every child can perceive who would have the best of this argument; and it is just such an argument as we are managing with the Episcopalians. Granting them all they ask concerning the testimony of the fathers, their conclusion is "good for nothing," because it concludes, as we have abundantly shown, against the New Testament itself. It is vain to declaim upon the improbability and impossibility of so sudden and universal a transition from Presbytery to Episcopacy, as they maintain must have taken place upon our plan. The revolution would have been very extraordinary, we confess. But many very extraordinary things are very true. All that the hierarchy gains by the testimony of the fathers, even when we allow her

to state it in her own way, is an extraordinary fact which she cannot explain for herself; and, therefore, insists that we shall explain it, or else bow the knee. We excuse ourselves. We are not compelled to the latter, and we are under no obligation to the former. The controversy must perpetually return to a simple issue, viz. Whether Episcopacy and the New Testament agree or not? We have proved, as we think, that they are irreconcilable. This is enough. Here is the New Testament on one side, and the hierarchy on the other. Conceding that she had very early possession of the church, what follows? Nothing but that order of the church was very early corrupted! Whether we can or cannot trace the steps and fix the date of this corruption, does not alter the case. Corruption is corruption still. If we can tell nothing about the rise of the hierarchy, our ignorance does not destroy its contrariety to the scripture. If we could ascertain the very hour of its rise, the discovery would not increase that contrariety. Our ignorance and our knowledge on this subject leave the original question exactly where they found it. A thousand volumes may be written; and after all, the final appeal must be "to the law and to the testimony."

It is clear, therefore, that should we even acquiesce in the account which our episcopal brethren give of the primitive testimony, we are justified in denying their conclusion: seeing that

all *inferences* against the decision of the New Testament itself, are necessarily invalid and false, be the facts from which they are deduced ever so many, ever so strong, or ever so indisputable.

But although, in our own opinion, the ground on which the prelatists have chosen to make their principal stand, affords them so little advantage as not to repay the trouble of dislodging them, we shall, for the sake of their further satisfaction, proceed to do them this service also.

They have heaped assertion upon assertion, that the testimony of the primitive church is *universally* in their favour; so explicitly and decisively in their favour, that if Episcopacy had not been instituted by apostolic authority, the whole Christian church must *suddenly* have changed her government from one end of the world to the other, without any adequate cause, and without any opportunity of previous concert.\*

When our opponents talk of the early and general prevalence of episcopacy, they must mean episcopacy *as embraced by themselves*, i. e. as *restricting the power of ordination and government to the superior order of clergy called bishops*; or else they are fighting for a shadow.

We deny their representation and shall prove it to be false.†

\* See the foregoing extracts.

† We cannot forbear remarking, by the way, a striking coincidence between the popish and the episcopal method of defence.

More than *fourteen hundred years* ago the superiority of the Prelates to Presbyters was attacked, in the most direct and open manner, as having no authority from our Lord Jesus Christ. The banner of opposition was raised not by a mean and obscure declaimer; but by a most consummate Theologian. “By one who, in the judgment of

When they begin to feel themselves pressed, they betake themselves to the scriptures; but finding themselves hard pushed here, they retreat to the fathers. There is scarcely a peculiarity of popery for which some papal polemics do not pretend to have their sanction. Take a sample.

“They of your” (the protestant) “side, that have read the fathers of that unspotted church, can well testify (and if any deny it, it shall be presently shown) that the Doctors, Pastors, and Fathers of that church do allow of traditions; that they acknowledge the real presence of the body of Christ in the sacrament of the altar: that they exhorted the people to confess their sins unto their ghostly fathers: that they affirmed, that Priests have power to forgive sins: that they taught, that there is a purgatory: that prayer for the dead is both commendable and godly: that there is *Limbus Patrum*; and that our Saviour descended into hell, to deliver the ancient fathers of the Old Testament; because before his passion none ever entered into heaven; that prayer to saints and use of holy images was of great account amongst them: that man had free-will, and that for his meritorious works he receiveth, through the assistance of God’s grace, the bliss of everlasting happiness.

“Now would I fain know whether of both have the true Religion, they that hold all these above said points, with the primitive Church; or they that do most vehemently contradict and gainsay them? They that do not disagree with that holy church in any point of religion; or they that agree with it but in very few, and disagree in almost all?

“Will you say, that these fathers maintained these opinions, contrary to the word of God? Why you know that they were

“Erasmus, was, without controversy, by far the most learned and most eloquent of all the Christians; and the prince of Christian Divines.”\* By the illustrious JEROME.†

Thus he lays down both *doctrine* and *fact* relative to the government of the church, in his commentary on Titus 1. 5.

the pillars of Christianity, the champions of Christ his church, and of the true Catholic religion, which they most learnedly defended against diverse heresies; and therefore spent all their time in a most serious study of the holy scripture. Or will you say, that although they knew the scriptures to repugn, yet they brought in the aforesaid opinions by malice and corrupt intentions? Why yourselves cannot deny, but that they lived most holy and virtuous lives, free from all malicious corrupting, or perverting of God's holy word, and by their holy lives are now made worthy to reign with God in his glory. Insomuch as their admirable learning may sufficiently cross out all suspicion of ignorant error; and their innocent sanctity freeth us from all mistrust of malicious corruption.” *Challenge of a Jesuit to Bishop Usher.*

In the course of his full and elaborate answer to this challenge, Usher quotes Cardinal *Bellarmino* as one “who would face us down that *all the ancients both Greek and Latin, from the very time of the Apostles, did constantly teach that there was a purgatory.* Whereas,” replies Usher, “his own partners could tell him in his ear, that *in the ancient writers there is almost no mention of purgatory; especially in the Greek writers.*” *USHER'S Answer, &c.* p. 170, 4to. 1625.

For “Purgatory,” put “Episcopacy,” and you will see pretty nearly how the account stands between eminent Episcopals themselves.

\* We quote the words of one who was assuredly no friend to our cause, vid. CAVE, *His. Litt. Script: Eccles.* p. 171. Ed. 1720. Fol.

† PROSPER, who was nearly his cotemporary, calls him *magister mundi*: i. e. the teacher of the world. *Ib.*



*That thou shouldest ordain Presbyters in every city, as I had appointed thee\**—"What sort of Pres-

\* "Qui qualis Presbyter debeat ordinari, in consequentibus disserens hoc ait: Si qui est sine crimine, unius uxoris vir," et cætera: postea intulit, "Oportet. n. Episcopum sine crimine esse, tanquam Dei dispensatorem." Idem est ergo Presbyter, qui et Episcopus, et antequam *diaboli instinctu*, studia in religione fierent, et diceretur in populis: "Ego sum Pauli, ego Apollo, ego autem Cephæ:" *communi Presbyterorum consilio* ecclesiæ gubernabantur. Postquam vero unusquisque eos, quos baptizaverat, suos putabat esse, non Christi: *in toto orbe decretum est, ut unus de Presbyteris electus superponeretur cæteris, ad quem omnis ecclesiæ cura pertineret*, et schismatum semina tollerentur. Putet aliquis non scripturarum, sed nostram, esse sententiam Episcopum et Presbyterum unum esse; et aliud ætatis, aliud esse nomen officii: relegat Apostoli ad Philippenses verba dicentis: Paulus et Timotheus servi Jesu Christi, omnibus sanctis in Christo Jesu, qui sunt Philippis, cum Episcopis et Diaconis, gratia vobis et pax, et reliqua. Philippi *una* est urbs Macedoniæ, et certe in una civitate *plures* ut nuncupantur, *Episcopi esse non poterant*. Sed quia *eosdem Episcopos illo tempore* quos et *Presbyteros* appellabant, propterea iudifferenter de Episcopis quasi de Presbyteris est locutus. Adhuc hoc alicui videatur ambiguum, nisi altero testimonio comprobetur. In Actibus Apostolorum scriptum est, quod cum venisset Apostolus Miletum, miserit Ephesum, et vocaverit Presbyteros ecclesiæ ejusdem, quibus postea inter cætera sit locutus: *attendite vobis, et omni gregi in quo vos Spiritus sanctus posuit Episcopos, pascere ecclesiam Domini quam acquisivit per sanguinem suum*. Et hoc diligentius observate, quo modo *unius civitatis Ephesi Presbyteros* vocans, postea eosdem *Episcopos* dixerit.—Hæc propterea, ut ostenderemus *apud veteres eosdem fuisse Presbyteros quos et Episcopos*. *Paulatim* vero, ut dissensionum plantaria evellerentur, ad *unum omnem sollicitudinem esse delatam*.—Sicut ergo Presbyteri *sciunt se ex ecclesiæ consuetudine* ei, qui sibi propositus fuerit, esse subjectos, ita Episcopi noverint se *magis consuetudine quam dispositionis dominicæ veritate*, Presbyteris esse majores, HIERONYMI Com: in *Tit*: l. i. *Opp. Tom. VI. p. 168 ed: Victorii, Paris 1623. Fol.*

byters ought to be ordained he shows afterwards : *If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, &c.* and then adds, *for a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God, &c.* A *Presbyter*, therefore, is the same as a *bishop* : and before there were, *by the instigation of the devil*, parties in religion ; and it was said among different people, *I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas*, the churches were governed by *the joint counsel of the Presbyters*. But afterwards, when every one accounted those whom he baptized as belonging to himself and not to Christ, it was *decreed throughout the whole world* that one, chosen from among the Presbyters, should be put over the rest, and that the whole care of the church should be committed to him, and the seeds of schisms taken away.

“ Should any one think that this is my private opinion, and not the doctrine of the scriptures, let him read the words of the apostle in his epistle to the Philippians ; ‘ Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons,’ &c. Philippi, is a *single* city of Macedonia ; and certainly in one city there could not be *several bishops* as they are now styled ; but as they, at that time, called the very same persons bishops whom they called Presbyters, the Apostle has spoken without distinction of bishops as Presbyters.

“ Should this matter yet appear doubtful to any

one, unless it be proved by an additional testimony; it is written in the acts of the Apostles, that when Paul had come to Miletum, he sent to Ephesus and called the Presbyters of that church, and among other things said to them, ‘take heed to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops.’ Take particular notice, that calling the PRESBYTERS of the single city of Ephesus, he afterwards names the same persons BISHOPS.” After further quotations from the epistle to the Hebrews, and from Peter, he proceeds: “Our intention in these remarks is to show, that, among the ancients, *Presbyters and Bishops were* THE VERY SAME. But that BY LITTLE AND LITTLE, that the plants of dissensions might be plucked up, the whole concern was divolved upon an individual. As the Presbyters, therefore, KNOW that they are subjected, BY THE CUSTOM OF THE CHURCH, to him who is set over them; so let the Bishops know, that they are greater than Presbyters MORE BY CUSTOM, than by ANY REAL APPOINTMENT OF CHRIST.”

He pursues the same argument, with great point, in his famous Epistle to Evagrius, asserting and proving from the Scriptures, that in the beginning and during the Apostles’ days, a Bishop and a Presbyter were the same thing. He then goes on: “As to the fact, that AFTERWARDS, one was ELECTED to preside over the rest, this was done as a remedy against schism; lest every one drawing

his proselytes to himself, should rend the church of Christ. For even at Alexandria, from the Evangelist Mark to the Bishops Heraclas and Dionysius, the Presbyters always chose one of their number, placed him in a superior station, and gave him the title of Bishop: in the same manner as if an army should MAKE an emperor; or the deacons should choose from among themselves, one whom they knew to be particularly active, and should call him ARCH-DEACON. For, excepting ordination, what is done by a Bishop, which may not be done by a Presbyter? Nor is it to be supposed, that the church should be one thing at Rome, and another in all the world besides. Both France and Britain, and Africa, and Persia, and the East, and India, and all the barbarous nations worship one Christ, observe one rule of truth. If you demand authority, the globe is greater than a city. Wherever a Bishop shall be found, whether at Rome, or Eugubium, or Constantinople, or Rhegium, or Alexandria, or Tanis, he has the same pretensions, the same priesthood.”\*

\* Quod autem postea *unus electus* est, qui cæteris præponeretur, in schismatis remedium factum est: ne unusquisque ad se trahens Christi Ecclesiam rumperet. Nam et Alexandria à Marco Evangelista usque ad Heraclam & Dionysium Episcopos, *presbyteri semper unum ex se electum, in excelsiori gradu collocatum, Episcopum nominabant*: quomodo si exercitus imperatorem faciat; aut diaconi eligant de se, quem industrium noverint, & *archidiaconum vocent*. Quid enim facit, *excepta ordinatione, Episcopus*, quod pres-

Here is an account of the origin and progress of Episcopacy, by a Father whom the Episcopals themselves admit to have been the most able and learned man of his age; and how contradictory it is to their own account, the reader will be at no loss to perceive, when he shall have followed us through an analysis of its several parts.

1. JEROME expressly denies the superiority of Bishops to Presbyters, by *divine right*. To prove his assertion on this head, he goes directly to the scriptures; and argues, as the advocates of parity do, from the interchangeable titles of Bishop and Presbyter; from the *directions* given to them without the least intimation of difference in their authority; and from the *powers* of Presbyters, undisputed in his day. It is very true, that the reasoning from *names*, is said, by those whom it troubles, to be “miserable sophistry,” and “good for nothing:” But as Jerome advances it with the utmost confidence, they might have forborne such a compliment to the “prince of divines” in the fourth century; especially as none of his cotemporaries, so far as we recollect, ever attempted to answer

*byter non faciat? Nec altera Romanæ urbis Ecclesia, altera totius orbis existimanda est. Et Galliæ, & Britanniæ, & Africa, & Persis, & Oriens, & India, & omnes barbaræ nationes unum Christum adorant, unam observant regulam veritatis. Si auctoritas quæritur, orbis major est urbe. Ubi cumque fuerit Episcopus, sive Romæ, sive Eugubii, sive Constantinopoli, sive Rhegii, sive Alexandriæ, sive Tanis; ejusdem meriti, ejusdem & sacerdotii.* Hieron. Opp. T. II. p. 624.

it. It is a *little* strange that laymen, and clergymen, deacons, priests, and bishops, should *all* be silenced by a page of “miserable sophistry!”

2. JEROME states it, as a *historical fact*, that, in the original constitution of the church, before the devil had as much influence as he acquired afterwards, *the churches were governed by the joint counsels of the Presbyters.*

3. JEROME states it as a *historical fact*, that this government of the churches, *by Presbyters alone*, continued until, for the avoiding of scandalous quarrels and schisms, it was thought expedient to *alter* it. “*Afterwards*,” says he, “when every one accounted those whom he baptized as belonging to himself, and not to Christ, it was *decreed throughout the whole world*, that one, chosen from among the Presbyters, should be put over the rest, and that the whole care of the church should be committed to him.”

4. JEROME states it as a *historical fact*, that this change in the government of the church—this creation of a superiour order of ministers, took place, not at once, but *by degrees*—“*Paulatim*,” says he, “by little and little.” The precise date on which this innovation upon primitive order *commenced*, he does not mention; but he says positively, that it did not take place till the factious spirit of the Corinthians had spread itself in different countries, to an alarming extent. “*In populis*,” is his expression. Assuredly, this was

not the work of a day. It had not been accomplished when the apostolic epistles were written, because Jerome appeals to these for proof that the churches were then governed by the joint counsels of Presbyters; and it is incredible that such ruinous dissensions, had they existed, should not have been noticed in letters to others beside the Corinthians. The disease indeed, was of a nature to spread rapidly; but still it must have time to travel. With all the zeal of Satan himself, and of a parcel of wicked or foolish clergymen to help him, it could not march from people to people, and clime to clime, but in a course of years. If Episcopacy was the *apostolic* cure for schism, the contagion must have smitten the nations like a flash of lightning. This would have been quite as extraordinary as an instantaneous change of government; and would have afforded full as much scope for pretty declamation, as the dream of such a change, which Cyprian and the Layman insist we *shall* dream whether we will or not. No: The progress of the mischief was gradual, and so, according to Jerome, was the progress of the *remedy* which the wisdom of the times devised.\*

\* Our opponents, who contend that nothing can be concluded from the promiscuous use of the scriptural titles of office, are yet compelled to acknowledge that *Bishop* and *Presbyter* were *afterwards* separated and restricted, the former to the superiour, and the latter to the inferiour order of ministers. We would ask them *when* and *why* this was done? If it was not necessary to distinguish these officers by specific titles in the apostles' day, what necessity

We agree with them, who think that the experiment introduced more evil than it banished.\*

5. JEROME states as *historical facts*, that the elevation of one Presbyter over the others, was a *human contrivance*;—was not *imposed* by authority,

was there for such a distinction afterwards? The church might have gone on, as she began, to this very hour; and what would have been the harm? Nay, there *was* a necessity for the distinction; and Jerome has blown the secret. When one of the Presbyters was set over the heads of the others, there was a *new officer*, and he wanted a *name*. So they appropriated the term *Bishop* to him; and thus avoided the *odium* of *inventing* a title unknown to the scripturo. The people, no doubt, were told that there was no material alteration in the scriptural order; and hearing nothing but a name to which they had always been accustomed, they were the less startled. The Trojan horse over again!

\* One thing is obvious. Had there never been, in the persons of the prelates, a sort of spiritual *noblesse*; there could never have been, in the person of the Pope, a spiritual *monarch*. For the very same reason that a Bishop was appointed to preserve unity among the Presbyters, it was necessary, in process of time, to appoint an *Archbishop* for preserving unity among the bishops; for we never yet heard, that increase of power makes its possessors less aspiring. In the same manner a *patriarch* became necessary to keep their graces the Archbishops in order: and finally, our sovereign lord the Pope, to look after the patriarchs! The analogy is perfect; the reasoning one; and the progression regular. What a beautiful pile! How correct its proportions! how elegant its workmanship! how compact and firm its structure! the Christian *people* at the bottom; rising above them, the *preaching deacons*: next in order the *Presbyters*; above them, the *Bishops*; these support the *Archbishops*, over whom tower the *patriarchs*; and one *universal Bishop* terminates the whole. Thus this glorious *Babylonish* edifice, having for its base the Christian world, tapers off, by exquisite gradations, into “*his holiness*” at Rome.



but *crept in by custom*;—and that the Presbyters of his day, *knew* this very well. *As, therefore*, says he, *the Presbyters* KNOW *that they are subjected to their superiour by CUSTOM*; so *let the bishops know that they are above the Presbyters, rather by the CUSTOM OF THE CHURCH, than by the Lord's appointment.*

6. JEROME states it as a *historical fact*, that the first bishops were made by the *Presbyters themselves*; and consequently they could neither have, nor communicate any authority above that of Presbyters. “*Afterwards*,” says he, “to prevent schism, one was *elected* to preside over the rest.” Elected and commissioned by whom? By the *Presbyters*: for he immediately gives you a broad fact which it is impossible to explain away. “At Alexandria,” he tells you, “from the evangelist Mark to the Bishops Heraclas and Dionysius,” i. e. till about the middle of the third century, “the Presbyters *always chose* one of their number, *placed him in a superiour station*, and gave him the title of *Bishop.*”

We have not forgotten the gloss put upon this passage, by *Detector*, in the collection under review.

“The truth is,” says he, “that Jerome affords no authority for this assertion. In his Epistle to Evag. he says, “*Nam et Alexandriæ, a Marco Evangelista usque ad Heraclam et Dionysium Episcopos, Presbyteri semper unum ex se electum, excelsiori gradu collocatum, Episcopum nominabant, quomodo si exercitus imperatorem faciat, aut diaconi eligant de se quem industrium noverint, et archidiaconum vocent.*” “At Alex-

andria, from Mark down to Heraclas and Dionysius the Bishops, the Presbyters always *named* one, who being chosen from among themselves, they called their Bishop, he being placed in a higher station, in the same manner as if an army should make their general, &c.” Does St. Jerome here declare, as the fictitious “Clemens” asserts, that “the Presbyters *ordained* their Bishop?” No; Jerome merely asserts, that the Presbyters *named, chose* one to be their Bishop. Does it hence follow, that they *gave him his commission*; that they *ordained* him? Does it *always* follow, that because an army choose their general, he does not receive his commission from the supreme authority of the state?”\*

With all deference to this learned critic, we cannot help our opinion, that the appointment, or, if you please, ordination, of the first bishops by Presbyters, not only *follows* from the words of Jerome, but is plainly *asserted* by them.

Dr. Hobart, overlooking the Roman idiom, has thrown into his *English*, an ambiguity which does not exist in the *Latin* of Jerome. According to the well known genius of that language, especially in writers who condense their thoughts, a verb governing one or more participles, in the construction before us, expresses the same meaning, though with greater elegance, as would be expressed by verbs instead of participles.† It is

\* DETECTOR, No. 1. *Collec.* p. 84.

† Ex. gr. In Cæsar’s description of the bridge which he constructed over the Rhine, the first sentence is exactly analogous to the sentence of Jerome: “Tigna bina sesquipedalia, paullum ab imo *præacuta, dimensa* ad altitudinem fluminis, intervallo pedum duorum inter se *jungebat.*” *De Bello Gallico.* Lib. IV. c. 17. p. 187. *æa.* OUDENORPII. 4to. 1737.

very possible that the *Detecter* might not use this construction; but then the *Detecter* does not write Latin like old Jerome. We should display the sentence at length, converting the participles into verbs, were it not for fear of affronting a scholar who insists that he has "sufficient learning to defend the Episcopal church."\*

"The truth is," that this "famous" testimony of Jerome, points out, in the process of bishop-making, but *one agency*, and that is the agency of *Presbyters*. Dr. H. himself has unwittingly confirmed our interpretation in the very paragraph where he questions it. His words are these: "Jerome merely asserts that the Presbyters *named, chose* one to be their bishop." Not *merely* this; for the words which Dr. H. renders "being placed in a higher station," are under the very same connection and government with the words which he renders, "being chosen from among themselves;" and if, as he has admitted, the latter declare a bishop to have been *elected* by the Presbyters, then, himself being judge, the former must declare him to have been *commissioned* by them. This is an awkward instance of *felo de se*; yet a proof, how properly the Reverend critic has assumed the ap-

We humbly apprehend that Cæsar had as much to do in *sawp-ening* and *measuring* the beams, as he had in *joining* them, and did not mean to say that the last operation was performed by his *own hands*, and the former by his *workmen*.

\* HOBERT'S *Apology*, p. 241.

pellation of *Detector* ; for he has completely *detected* himself, and no one else !

That we rightly construe Jerome's assertion, is clear, from the scope of his argument, and from his phraseology toward the close of the paragraph.

His position is, that a Bishop and a Presbyter were, at first, the same officer. And so notorious was the fact, that he appeals to the history of the church in Alexandria, as an instance which lasted a century and a half, that when Bishops were made, they were made by Presbyters. But had Dr. H.'s construction been right, had Prelates alone ordained other prelates, the fact, instead of being *for* Jerome, would have been directly *against* him : and surely he was not so dull as to have overlooked this circumstance ; although it seems to have escaped the notice of some of his sagacious commentators.

JEROME says, moreover, that Presbyters originally became Bishops, much in the same way as if an army should "MAKE an Emperor ; or the deacons should elect one of themselves, and call him *Arch-deacon*."

The *Detector* has given the passage a *twist*, in the hope of *twisting* Jerome out, and *twisting* the hierarchy in. "Does it *always* follow," he demands, "that because an army choose their general, he does not receive his commission from the supreme authority of the state ?" Certainly not : Although he would have gratified some of his

readers by producing examples of the armies of those ages choosing their general, and remitting him to a higher authority for his commission. But how came the *Detector* to alter Jerome's phrase from "*making*" to "*choosing*" a general? We always thought, that *making* and *commissioning* an officer, are the same thing. Further, how came the *Detector* to render Jerome's "*imperator*" by "*general*?" Almost all the world, (for the *Detector* seems to be an exception,) knows that "*Imperator*," in Jerome's day, signified not "*general*," but "*Emperor*;" and was the highest official title of the Roman monarchs. It is further known, that the army had, on more occasions than one, *made* an emperor; and that this was all the commission he had. "You inquire," says Jerome, "how the bishops were at first appointed. Suppose the deacons should get together and elect one of their number to preside over the rest, with the title of *Arch-deacon*; or suppose the army should elevate a person whom they thought fit, to the Imperial throne; just so, by their own authority and election, did the Presbyters make the first Bishops."—And yet Dr. H. can find, in this very testimony, a salvo for *Episcopal* ordination.—His powers of *detection* are very uncommon;

For optics sharp he needs, I ween,  
Who sees what is not to be seen!

7. JEROME states it, as a *historical fact*, that even in his own day, that is, toward the end of the

fourth century, there was no power, excepting ordination, exercised by a Bishop, which might not be exercised by a Presbyter. "What does a Bishop," he asks, "excepting ordination, which a Presbyter *may not* do?"

Two observations force themselves upon us.

1st. Jerome challenges the whole world, to show in what prerogative a Presbyter was, at *that time*, inferiour to a Bishop, excepting the single power of ordination. A challenge which common sense would have repressed, had public opinion concerning the *rights* of Presbyters allowed it to be successfully met.

2d. Although it appears from Jerome himself, that the prelates were not then in the habit of associating the Presbyters with themselves, in an equal right of *government*, yet, as he told the former, to their faces, that the right was undeniable, and ought to be respected by them, it presents us with a strong fact in the *progress* of Episcopal domination. Here was a power in Presbyters, which, though undisputed, lay, for the most part, dormant. The transition from disuse, to denial, and from denial to extinction of powers which the possessors have not vigilance, integrity, or spirit to enforce, is natural, short, and rapid. According to Jerome's declaration, the hierarchy did not pretend to the exclusive right of government. Therefore, there was but *half* a hierarchy, according to the present system. That the Bishops had, some

time after, the powers of ordination and government both, is clear. How did they acquire the monopoly? By apostolic institution? No. Jerome refutes that opinion from the scriptures and history. By apostolical tradition? No. For in the latter part of the fourth century, their single prerogative over Presbyters was the power of ordination. Government was at first exercised by the Presbyters in common. When they had, by their own act, placed a superiour over their own heads, they rewarded his distinction, his toils, and his perils, with a proportionate reverence; they grew slack about the maintenance of troublesome privilege; till at length, their courtesy, their indolence, their love of peace, or their hope of promotion, permitted their high and venerable trust to glide into the hands of their prelates. We have no doubt that the course of the *ordaining power* was similar, though swifter.

Nothing can be more pointless and pithless than the declamation of Cyprian, the Layman, and their Bishop, on the *change* which took place in the original order of the church. They assume a *false fact*, to wit, that the change must have happened, if it happened at all, *instantaneously*: and then they expatiate, with great vehemence, on the *impossibility* of such an event. This is mere noise. The change was *not* instantancous, nor sudden. The testimony of Jerome, which declares that it was *gradual*, has sprung a mine under the very

foundation of their edifice, and blown it into the air. Were we inclined to take up more of the reader's time on this topic, we might turn their own weapon, such as it is, against themselves. They do not pretend that Archbishops, Patriarchs, and Primates, are of Apostolical institution. They will not so insult the understanding and the senses of men, as to maintain that these officers have no more power than simple Bishops. Where, then, were all the principles of adherence to Apostolic order when these creatures of human policy made their entrance into the church? Among whom were the daring innovators to be found? Where was the learning of the age? Where its spirit of piety, and its zeal of martyrdom? Where were the Presbyters? Where the Bishops? What! all, all turned traitors at *once*? All, all conspire to abridge their own rights, and submit their necks to new-made superiours? What! *none* to reclaim or remonstrate? Absurd! Incredible! Impossible! These questions, and a thousand like them, might be asked by an advocate for the divine right of *Patriarchs*, with as much propriety and force as they are asked by advocates of the simpler Episcopacy. And so, by vociferating on *abstract principles*, the evidence of men's eyes and ears is to be overturned, and they are to believe that there are not now, and never have been, such things as Archbishops, Patriarchs, or Primates in the Christianized world;



seeing that by the *assumption* of the argument, they have no divine original; and by its *terms*, they could not have been introduced by mere human contrivance.

To return to Jerome. The Prelatists being unable to evade his testimony concerning the change which was effected in the original order of the church, would persuade us that he means a change brought about by the *authority of the Apostles* themselves.\* But the subterfuge is unavailing. For,

(1.) It alleges a *conjectural tradition* against the authority of the *written scriptures*. For no trace of a change can be seen there.

(2.) It overthrows completely all the proof drawn for the hierarchy from the Apostolic records. For, if this change was introduced by the Apostles *after* their canonical writings were closed, then it is vain to seek for it in those writings. The consequence is, that the Hierarchists must either retreat from the New Testament, or abandon Jerome.

(3.) It makes the intelligent father a downright fool—to plead Apostolic authority for the original equality of ministers; and in the same breath to produce that same authority for the inequality which he was resisting!

(4.) To crown the whole, it tells us that the apostles having fixed, under the influence of *divine inspiration*, an order for the church; found, upon a few years' trial, that it would *not do*, and were

\* HOBART'S *Apology*, p. 174, &c.

obliged to mend it : only they forgot to apprise the churches of the alteration ; and so left the exploded order *in* the rule of faith ; and the new order *out* of it ; depositing the commission of the prelates with that kind foster-mother of the hierarchy, *Tradition !*\*

We may now remind our reader of the Layman's declaration, that we "*can produce NO record of a CHANGE ; but are obliged to imagine one, in opposition to the UNIFORM testimony of the primitive Fathers !*" And of the declaration of Cyprian, that we talk "*of a change that must have taken place at an early period ; but can produce NO PROOF on which to ground our bold assertions*"—That we "*are countenanced by NONE OF THE RECORDS of these times that have been transmitted to us*"—That our opinion is "*mere conjecture, a creature of the imagination !*" These gentlemen have, indeed, made their excuse ; they have honestly told us, what their pages verify, that they are but "striplings" in literature. But that a prelate, from whom we have a right to look for digested knowledge, and scrupulous accuracy, should deal out the same crude and unqualified language, excites both surprise and regret. He has been pleased to say, that our late brother, the Rev. DR. LINN, in "*representing Jerome as favouring the Presbyterian scheme of church go-*

\* If any of our readers wishes to have a fuller view of the writings of the hierarchy on Jerome's spear, we advise him to read Dr. Hobart's Apology, p. 174—194

vernment," has "*pursued the usual mode of* ARTFUL MISREPRESENTATION." With *whom* the *misrepresentation* lies, we leave to public opinion. But as we wish to give every one his due, we cannot charge the Right Reverend Prelate with any *art*; nor withhold an advice, that when he is searching, on this subject, for a "spark of modesty," he would direct his inquiries to a "bosom" to which he has much easier access, than to the bosom of any Presbyterian under heaven.

After this exhibition of Jerome's testimony, it would be superfluous to follow with particular answers, all the petty exceptions which are founded upon vague allusions and incidental phrases. Jerome, like every other writer upon subjects which require a constant reference to surrounding habits, conforms his speech to his circumstances. He could not be for ever on his guard; and if he had been, no vigilance could have secured him from occasional expressions which might be interpreted as favourable to a system which he solemnly disapproved. This will sufficiently account for those disconnected sentences which the friends of the hierarchy have so eagerly seized. We could show, taking them one by one, that they fall very far short of the mark to which they are directed.\*

\* The quotation which stands most in the way of our argument, and of Jerome's testimony, is from his "Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers;" where, says Dr. Hobart, "he *records* as a *matter of fact*, 'JAMES, immediately after our Lord's ascension, having been

When we want to know a man's matured thoughts on a disputed point, we must go to those parts of his works where he has deliberately, and of set purpose, handled it. All his looser observations must be controlled by these. A contrary procedure inverts every law of criticism; and the inversion is not the more tolerable, or the less reprehensible, because advocates of the hierarchy have chosen to adopt it. But if Jerome's testimony is to be slighted, because he was fervid, impetuous, and unceremonious, we much fear that some of the most important facts in ecclesiastical and civil history must be branded as apocryphal. We are very sure that none of Dr. H.'s friends could ask

ORDAINED BISHOP OF JERUSALEM, undertook the charge of the church at Jerusalem. TIMOTHY WAS ORDAINED BISHOP of the Ephesians by PAUL, TITUS of Crete. POLYCARP was by JOHN ORDAINED BISHOP of Smyrna.' Here, then," the reader perceives the triumph, "here, then, we have *bishops* ordained in the churches by the apostles themselves." HOBART'S *Apology*, p. 194.

There is a small circumstance rather unfavourable to this voucher.—It is not JEROME'S. Of that part which relates to Timothy and Titus, this is expressly asserted by the episcopal historian, CAVE; and by Jerome's popish editor. Vide CAVE, *Script. eccles. hist. litter.* p. 172, ed. Colon. 1720. HIERON. *Opp. T. I.* p. 265. 268. ed. Victorii. The articles JAMES and POLYCARP are so precisely in the same style with the others, and so diametrically repugnant to Jerome's own doctrine, that if, by "*bishop*," is meant such a bishop as was known in his day, it is inconceivable they should have proceeded from his pen. That they are interpolations, or have been interpolated, we think there is internal evidence. At least, when several articles of the same catalogue, tending to the same point, and written in the same strain, are confessedly spurious; it is hardly safe to rely upon the remainder as authentic testimony.

the credence of the world to a single assertion in his Apology. And if similar productions were the fashion of the day, we have no reason to wonder at indignant feeling and vehement language in men of a less fiery spirit than father JEROME.

The advocates of Episcopacy assert that the whole current of fact and of opinion for *fifteen hundred years* after Christ, is in their favour; that we ‘can produce *no* record of a *change*,” in the government of the church, “but are obliged to *imagine* one in opposition to the *uniform* testimony of the primitive fathers.”

We have met them on this ground; and have “produced” the “testimony” of one of the “primitive fathers,” directly against the divine original of the hierarchy. This was JEROME, the most learned, able, and distinguished of them all. He tells us, in so many words, not only that the episcopal pre-eminence is without divine authority; but that this was a fact which could not, with any show of reason, be disputed; as being a fact well ascertained and understood. “The Presbyters,” says he, “*know*, that they are subjected *by the custom of the church*, to him who is set over them.”\*

To elude the force of Jerome’s deposition, it is alleged, among other things, that his opinion is of no weight unsupported by facts; and that his testimony, in the fourth century, concerning facts in the first and second centuries, that is, two or three

\* See page 234.

hundred years before he was born, is no better than an opinion; and so he is excluded from the number of competent witnesses.\*

By this rule some other witnesses who have been summoned by our Episcopal brethren, must be cast without a hearing. Eusebius, Chrysostom, Augustin, Theodoret, Epiphanius, must all be silenced. It is even hard to see how a single man could be left, in the whole catalogue of the Fathers, as competent to certify any fact of which he was not an eye-witness. To say that they derived their information of times past from credible tradition, or authentic records, is indeed to overrule the principle of the objection. But when this door is opened to admit the others, you cannot prevent JEROME from walking in. We will allow that EUSEBIUS had access to "all the necessary records of the churches." But had JEROME no records to consult? Was "the most learned of all the Christians," as ERASMUS calls him, with CAVE's approbation, in the habit of asserting historical facts without proof? If he was, let our opponents show it. If he was not, as his high reputation for learning is a pledge, then his testimony is to be viewed as a summary of inductive evidence reaching back to the days of the Apostles. In his estimation, the facts of the original parity of ministers, and of the subsequent elevation of prelates

\* CYPRIAN, No. VII. *Essays* p. 167. HOBART'S *Apology*, p. 171—178.

by the *custom of the church*, were so undeniable, that he did not think it worth his while to name a document. The conduct of this great man was different from that of some very confident writers whom we could mention. He sifted his authorities, and then brought forward his facts without any specific reference, instead of making stiff assertions upon the credit of authors, whom he never read, nor even consulted.

JEROME, we contend, is not only as good a witness in the case before us, as EUSEBIUS or any other father, but that he is a far better and more unexceptionable witness than either that renowned historian, or any other prelate or friend of prelates. Whatever Eusebius, Chrysostom, Epiphanius, Theodoret, &c. testify in *favour* of episcopacy, must be received with this very important qualification, that they were *themselves bishops*; and were testifying in favour of their *own* titles, emolument, grandeur, and power. They had a very deep interest at stake. An interest sufficient, if not to shake their credibility on this point, yet greatly to reduce its value. On the contrary, JEROME had nothing to gain, but much to lose. He put his interest and his peace in jeopardy. He had to encounter the hostility of the episcopal order, and of all who aspired to its honours. He had to resist the growing encroachments of corruption, and that under the formidable protection of a civil establishment. He had, therefore, every possible

inducement to be *sure of his facts* before he attacked a set of dignitaries who were not, in his age, the most forbearing of mankind.\* The conclusion is, that JEROME, as we said, is a more unexceptionable witness than any prelate. To illustrate—let us suppose a tribunal erected in England to try this question, *Is Episcopacy of divine institution?* that no witnesses can be procured but such as were brought up in the church itself; and that the judges were obliged to depend upon their report of facts. The bishop of Durham is sworn, and deposes that he has examined the records of the church, and finds her to have been episcopal from the beginning. A presbyter of the same church, of equal talent, learning, and application, is sworn, and deposes that he too has examined the records, and finds that, at the beginning, these Christian ministers were of equal rank; but that by degrees inequality crept in; and that the bishops have no pre-eminence but what the custom of the church has given them. In general character, for integrity, the witnesses are equal. They flatly contradict each other. Who, now, is the most credible witness? The presbyter runs the hazard of almost every thing in life by *his* testimony. The testimony of my lord of Durham goes to protect his own dignity in the church; his seat in the house of peers; and a revenue of £20,000 sterling, per annum. A child can decide who is

\* MOSHEIM, Vol. I. p. 356.



most worthy of credit. Nearly such is the difference between the witnesses for Episcopacy, and JEROME, the witness for Presbytery.

BUT we waive our advantage. We shall lay no stress upon JEROME's *opinion*. We shall cut off from his deposition every thing but what came within his personal observation. "The presbyters," says he, "*know* that they are subject to their bishop, by the custom of the church." His testimony embraces a fact in existence and obvious at the time of deposition; viz. the knowledge which the presbyters of *his day* had of their being subject to their bishops, solely by the custom of the church, and not by Christ's appointment. This assertion is correct, or it is not. If it is not, then JEROME appealed to all the world for the truth of what he knew, and every body else knew, was an absurd lie. No brass on the face of impudence, inferiour to that of the Duc de Cadore, is brazen enough for this. On the other hand, if the assertion be correct, how is this knowledge "of the presbyters" to be explained? Where did they get it? From one of two sources. Either there must have been such a previous discussion of the subject, as ended in establishing a general conviction in the minds of the Christian clergy, that prelacy is a human invention; or which is more probable, the remnants and the recollection of the primitive order still subsisted in considerable vigour, not.

withstanding the rapid growth of the hierarchy since the accession of Constantine.

It is inconceivable how JEROME should tell the bishops to their faces, that Christ never gave them any superiority over the presbyters; that custom was their only title; and that the presbyters were perfectly aware of this; unless he was supported by facts which they were unable to contradict. Their silence under his challenges, is more than a presumption that they found it wise to let him alone. It amounts to little short of absolute proof, that there was yet such a mass of information concerning their rise, and so much of unsubdued spirit in the church, as rendered it dangerous to commit their claim to the issue of free inquiry. JEROME, with the register of antiquity in his hand, and the train of presbyters at his back, was too potent an adversary. They could have crushed the man; but they trembled at the truth; and so they sat quietly down, leaving to time and habit, the confirmation of an authority which they did not, as yet, venture to derive from the word of God.

In the next age, when JEROME was dead, the presbyters cowed; and the usurpation of the prelates further removed from the reach of a reforming hand; EPIPHANIUS did, it is true, bluster at no ordinary rate against the "heretic" AERIUS; for what reason we shall shortly see. But it is very remarkable, that in the fourth century, when the pretensions of the prelates were pretty openly can-

vassed, they spoke with great caution, and with manifest reluctance on those parts of Scripture which touch the point of parity. Let any one, for example, look at the commentaries of CHRYSOSTOM on the epistles to Timothy and Titus. Copious and fluent on other passages, he is most concise and embarrassed on those which relate to ministerial rank. Something he was obliged to say : but the plain words of the apostle exhibit a picture so unlike the hierarchy, that the eloquent patriarch, under the semblance of interpretation, throws in a word or two to blind the eyes of his readers, and shuffles off to something else ; but never so much as attempts to argue the *merits* of the question upon scriptural ground. This is the reverse of JEROME's practice in his exposition. At this early day we find the advocate for parity boldly appealing to Scripture ; examining, comparing, and reasoning upon its decisions ; and the prelati cal expounder skipping away from it with all possible haste and dexterity. We leave the reader to draw his own inference.

The sentiment that Prelates are superiour to Presbyters, not by any divine appointment, but merely by the prevalence of custom, extended, among the Latins of the fourth century, much further than Father JEROME. He himself tells us, that the Presbyters of his day not only *thought* so, but *knew* so ; and, assuming this as an incontrovertible fact, he grounds upon it an admonition to

the Bishops to recollect their origin. “Let them know,” says he, “that they are above the Presbyters more by the custom of the Church, than by any institution of Christ.” Considering him as an honest witness, which is all we ask, and our Episcopal friends will not deny it, he asserts, without qualification, that the Presbyters, i. e. the *mass of Christian clergy*, in his time, were convinced, upon satisfactory proof, that the authority exercised over them by the prelates, limited, as it *then* was, and nothing like what they *now* claim, had no warrant whatever, either in the word of God, or even in apostolical tradition! We repeat it; the great body of the Christian clergy, according to JEROME, were aware of this!! Here, since they call for *facts*, here is a fact more ponderous than all the facts of Episcopacy put together; a fact which there is no frittering away, not even by the force of that vigorous criticism which inverts persons and tenses; transmutes Hebrew verbs into others with which they have no affinity; and changes the very letters of the Hebrew alphabet; so that a *zain*, is charmed into a *nun*, and, by this happy metamorphosis, the throat of an ill-conditioned argument escapes from suffocation!\*

The testimony of JEROME is corroborated by a contemporary writer of high renown, and an unexceptionable witness in this case, as being him-

\* *Churchman's Magazine* for May and June, 1810. on Exod. xxxiii. 19. p. 178.

self a Prelate; we mean AUGUSTIN, the celebrated Bishop of Hippo. In a letter to JEROME, he has these remarkable words:—

“ Although, according to the names of honour which the *usage of the Church* has now acquired, the office of a Bishop is greater than that of a Presbyter, yet in many things Augustin is inferiour to Jerome.”\* The sense of this acknowledgment is thus given by a distinguished Prelate of the Church of England, as quoted by Ayton:—“ The office of a Bishop is above the office of a Priest, not by the authority of the Scripture, but after the names of honour which, through the custom of the Church, have now obtained.”†

The concession is so clear and ample, that Cardinal BELLARMINE, with all his integrity, which was not a little, had no other evasion, than to pretend that these words *are not opposed to the ancient time of the Church*; but to the *time before the Christian Church*; so that the sense is, *before the times of the Christian Church these names, Bishop and Presbyter, were not titles of honour, but of office and age; but now they are names of honour and dignity.*‡

Quibbles were scarce when a distressed cardinal could muster up nothing more plausible. As

\* *Quamquam secundum honorum vocabula quæ jam Ecclesie usus obtinuit, episcopatus presbyterio major sit; tamen in multis rebus Augustinus Hieronymo minor est.* Ep. 19. ed HIERON.

† JEWEL. Defence of his apology, p. 122, 123.

‡ Jameson's *Nazianzeni querela*, p. 177, 178.

if names of *office* were not names of *dignity* ! As if AUGUSTIN, in the very act of paying a tribute of profound respect to JEROME, should think of giving him a bit of grammar lesson about the words “Bishop” and “Presbyter !” Verily, the Jesuit was in sore affliction ; and had he uttered all his soul, would have exclaimed, like a certain *Arminian* preacher, when hard pressed by Scriptural reasoning ;—“ O argument, argument ! The Lord rebuke thee, argument !”

Not much happier than the cardinal, nor much less anxious for such a rebuke to argument than the Arminian preacher, will be those critics who shall maintain that AUGUSTIN’s words regard only the *names* of office, without any opinion on the powers or rank of the offices themselves.

1. Such a construction makes the Bishop assert a direct falsehood ; the *terms* were in use from the beginning of the Christian Church ; and, therefore, could not have been introduced by her customs.

2. If, by saying that he was superiour to Jerome “according to the names of honour which the Church had obtained by usage,” Augustin meant that he enjoyed only a *titular* pre-eminence over that Presbyter, he either insulted Jerome by flouting at him with a lie in the shape of a compliment, or else the Prelates in his day had only a *nominal*, and not a real, power over the Presbyters. The

second is contrary to fact; and the first is too absurd for even a troubled cardinal.

If, on the other hand, it be alleged that Augustin, in flattery to Jerome, seemed to claim only a titular precedence, while he was conscious, at the same time, of enjoying an essential superiority, and that by divine right, the disputant will turn himself out of the frying pan into the fire; for he exhibits the venerable father as acting the knave for the pleasure of proving himself to be a fool. So paltry a trick was not calculated to blow dust into the eyes of Jerome. The distinction might appear ingenious to some modern champions of the hierarchy, as it is much in their manner; but could never degrade the pen of the Bishop of Hippo. He is contrasting his *official* superiority over Jerome, with Jerome's *personal* superiority over himself. The former is the superiority of a Bishop over a Presbyter, which, he says, has grown out of the custom of the Church. The compliment to Jerome consists in this—that while the office which sets him above Jerome was the fruit, not of his own deserts, but of the Church's custom, those things which gave Jerome *his* superiority, were personal merits. The compliment is as fine, and its form as delicate, as the spirit which dictated it is magnanimous.

But our concern is with the *fact* which it discloses. Turn Augustin's words into a syllogism, and it will stand thus:

Augustin is greater than Jerome, according to the honours which have been created by the custom of the Church.

But Augustin is greater than Jerome, as a Bishop is greater than a Presbyter.

*Therefore*, a Bishop is greater than a Presbyter by the custom of the Church.

Here, now, is Augustin himself, a Bishop of no common character, disclaiming, unequivocally, the institution of Episcopacy by divine right: For he refers the distinction between Bishop and Presbyter not only to a merely human original, but to an original the least imperative; to one which, however potent it becomes in the lapse of time, is at first too humble to arrogate authority, too feeble to excite alarm, and too noiseless almost to attract notice. He calls it the creature of *custom*. What shall we say to this testimony of Augustin? He was under no necessity of revealing his private opinion. He had no temptation to sap the foundation of his own edifice; to diminish the dignity of his own order. All his interests and his prejudices lay in the opposite direction. Yet he speaks of Episcopacy as the child of custom, in the most frank and unreserved manner; without an apology, without a qualification, without a caution. He does this in a letter to JEROME, the very man to whom, upon *modern* Episcopal principles, he should not, would not, and could not have done it—the very man who had openly, and boldly, and repeat



edly attacked the whole hierarchy; whose sentiments, reasonings, and proofs, were no secret to others, and could be none to him—the very man, whose profound research, whose vigorous talent, and whose imposing name, rendered him the most formidable adversary of the prelature, and threatened to sway more decisively the public opinion, than a thousand inferiour writers—the very man, therefore, whom it became his duty to resist. Yet to this man does Augustin, the Bishop, write a letter in which he assigns to Episcopacy the very same origin which Jerome himself had ascribed to it—*human custom*!!

Was Augustin ignorant? Was he treacherous? Was he cowardly? Was he mad? To write in this manner to Jerome! and to write it with as much composure, and *sang froid*, as he would have alluded to any the most notorious fact in existence! No. He was not ignorant, nor treacherous, nor cowardly, nor mad. But he spoke, in the honesty of his heart, what he knew to be true; and what no well advised man would think of denying. Such a concession, from such a personage, at such a time, under such circumstances, is conclusive. It shows, that in his day, the Bishops of the Latin Church did not dream of asserting their superiority to Presbyters by divine right. They had it from the custom of the Church, and so long as that custom was undisturbed, it was enough for them. Among the Greeks, the blundering, and

hair-brained Epiphanius set up the claim of a *jus divinum*; but his contemporaries were discreet enough to let him fight so foolish a battle single handed.

TO JEROME and AUGUSTIN we may add PELAGIUS, once their intimate friend, and afterwards, on account of his heresy, their sworn enemy. "He restricts all Church officers to *priest* and *deacon* :\* and asserts, that *priests*, without discrimination or restriction, are the *successors of the apostles*."† He has more to the same purpose; reasoning as JEROME reasoned, from the Scriptures; and coming, as did SEDULIUS, PRIMASIUS, and others, to the same result; viz. the identity of Bishop and Presbyters.‡

Let not the *heresy* of Pelagius be objected to us. Our Arminians will not surely cast opprobrium upon the name of this, their ancient sire. For our parts, we, with Augustin, hold him in detestation, as an enemy of the grace of God. But his heresy does not vitiate his testimony in the present case. Fiercely as he was attacked by Jerome and Augustin, his opinions on the subject of Prelacy made no article of accusation against him as a heretic. Could it have been done with any show of reason, we may be certain it would not have been spared. But the silence of his Prelatical

\* In Rom. xii.

† In 1 Cor. i.

‡ Not having access to these writers, we quote from *Jameson's Nazianzen*: p. 176, 177.

antagonists, on that head, is a proof both of the justness of our foregoing comments on AUGUSTIN's letter, and also of the general fact, that the Bishops were conscious of their inability to meet the question of their order upon the ground of divine right.

There are two considerations which clothe our argument with additional force.

The *first* is, that all *able* heretics, as PELAGIUS confessedly was, in their assault upon the Church of God, direct their batteries against those points in which they deem her to be the least defensible. Rightly judging, that it is good policy to make a breach, no matter where. Only unsettle the popular mind as to any one object which it has been accustomed to venerate, and the perversion of it with regard to many others, is much facilitated. If, in this policy, *Pelagius* and his coadjutors attacked the authority of the Bishops, they seized upon the defenceless spot; and the bishops were beaten without a struggle. It is easy to perceive what an immense advantage was gained by the heretics in their grand conflict, when their opponents were put fairly in the wrong on an incidental point, but a point which, in itself, touched the very nerves of the public passions.

The *second* consideration is, that persons of such different conditions, and such hostile feelings, could never have united in a common opinion upon a deeply interesting topic. had not the facts upon

which their union rested been perfectly indisputable.

Here is Presbyter and Prelate; the monk of Palestine, and the African Bishop; orthodoxy and heresy; Augustin and Pelagius; all combining in one and the same declaration—that Episcopacy has no better original than the *custom of the Church*! Nothing but truth—acknowledged truth—truth which it was vain to doubt, could have brought these jarring materials into such a harmony; these discordant spirits into such a concurrence.—Stronger evidence it is hardly possible to obtain; and it would be the very pertness of incredulity to demand. Yet there are writers who do not blush to look us in the face, and assert that the testimony of the primitive Fathers is *universally* in favour of Episcopacy, as having been established by Christ and his apostles!!\*

Does the sun shine? Is the grass green? Are stones hard? Another shove, and we shall be in Dean Berkeley's ideal world!—If every thing sober and solid is to be thus outfaced, there is nothing for it, but to abandon fact and demonstration as chimeras, and to take up what was once the ditty of a fool, but is now the best philosophy,

Παντα κινις, και παντα ΓΕΛΩΣ, και παντα το ΜΗΔΕΝ.

CHURCH OF GOD

# CHURCH OF GOD.

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## No. I.

IT is our intention to lay before our readers in a series of numbers, a detailed but succinct account of the Church of God, embracing the chief questions concerning its nature, members, officers, order, worship, and the points directly connected with them. As we shall proceed upon a regular plan, the reader is requested not to form his judgment of the whole from an inspection of a part; and not to disjoin in his reflections those parts, which precede from those which follow; but to recur to the former as he meets with the latter, that the series of thought may be preserved unbroken in his mind; and that he may not accuse us hereafter with being superficial or negligent, when the blame ought possibly to be attached to his own memory. For having proved a point once, we shall not repeat the proof afterwards, unless for very particular reasons, and in a very summary way. We begin with

*An inquiry into the meaning of the term CHURCH.*

A community which has subsisted for ages, must always possess a number of usages and terms peculiar to itself. And although their origin may be remote, and their force unknown to many of its members, they suggest general ideas which serve the purposes of common conversation and common life. The fact may appear extraordinary, but it is nevertheless true; for the proportion of men in any society who analyze the words and phrases which they have been accustomed to utter ever since they were able to speak, is comparatively small. The reader can bring this matter to an easy test by interrogating himself concerning expressions which are coeval with his earliest recollection; and he will probably be surprised to find that, in thousands of instances, they have passed and repassed through his mind without his attempting to arrest them long enough to satisfy himself as to their appropriate sense. This want of precision is accompanied with no bad effect, till something occur to touch an institution, a privilege, or an observance, when the inconvenience may be sensibly felt. A popular notion is often overturned by the interpretation of a word; and the multitude are astonished either at their own mistake, or at the effrontery of those who charge them with committing it.

That which happens to all other durable com-

binations of men, must happen to the Christian Society. We need go no further for an example than its very name. “Church,” “Christian Church,” “Church of God,” are familiar to the mouths of millions. They talk of “the Church” upon all occasions, without suspecting that perhaps they understand not what they say. They possibly never asked *what is the Church?* Possibly, they may think it too plain to deserve an answer. Possibly, also, the more they revolve it, the more they may be puzzled. Try the experiment. Put the question successively to several decent, intelligent men, and their replies, various as their previous religious habits, will convince you that their acquaintance with the subject is slight indeed. It is therefore necessary to go to first principles.

The word “Church,” derived from the Greek *κυριακὸν*, signifies “the house of the Lord;” and marks the *property* which he has in it. But the original words which it is employed to translate, signify a different thing. The Hebrew words קהל (*cahal*) and עדה (*gheda*) in the Old Testament; and the corresponding one ἐκκλησία (*ecclesia*) in the New, all signify *an assembly*, especially one convened by invitation or appointment. That this is their generic sense, no scholar will deny; nor that their particular applications are ultimately resolvable into it. Hence it is evident, that from the terms themselves nothing can be concluded



as to the nature or extent of the assembly which they denote. Whenever either of the two former occurs in the Old Testament, or the other in the New, you are sure of an *assembly*, but of nothing *more*. What that assembly is, and whom it comprehends, you must learn from the *connexion* of the term, and the *subject* of the writer. A few instances will exemplify the remark.

In the Old Testament קהל, (*cáhal*) is applied

To the *whole mass* of the people, . *Ex.* xii. 6.

To a *portion* of the people, who came upon Hezekiah's invitation to keep the passover.

2 *Chron.* xxx. 24.

To the *army* of Pharaoh. . . *Ezek.* xvii. 17.

To an *indefinite multitude*. . . *Gen.* xxviii. 3.

To the society of Simeon and Levi. xlix. 6.

So also עדה, (*ghcda*) is applied

To the *whole* nation of Israel. *Ex.* xvi. 22 ;  
xxxv. 1.

To the *particular* company of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. . . . . *Numb.* xvi. 16.

To the assembly of the *just*, as opposed to the *wicked*. . . . . *Psal.* i. 5.

To the *judicatory*, before which crimes were tried. . . . . *Numb.* xxxv. 12. 24 ;  
compared with *Deut.* xix. 12. 17. 18.

In like manner ἐκκλησία, (*ecclesiá*) rendered "Church," is applied

To the *whole body* of the redeemed.

*Ephes.* v. 24. 27

To the *whole body* of professing Christians.

1 Cor. xii. 28

To *local* organizations of professing Christians, whether more or less extensive ; as in the apostolic salutations, and inscriptions of the epistles.

To a *small association* of Christians meeting together in a private house. Col. iv. 15.—Phil. i. 2.

To a civil assembly *lawfully* convened.

Act. xix. 39.

To a body of people *irregularly* convened.

Act. xix. 32.

This specimen is sufficient to show that no person can answer the question, “ what is the *Church* ? ” without carefully examining the *thing* as well as the *name* : nor safely expound either, without consulting the original scriptures ; or putting himself implicitly under the direction of one who is able to do it for him. An attempt to discuss the constitution and order of the church, without looking much further and much deeper than the mere *term*, as it occurs in our English Bibles, can never be any better than childish prattle.

I have said that the term “ Church ” is applied to the whole body of professing Christians ; and my design is to prove that the scriptures teach the doctrine of a *Visible Church Catholic*, composed of all those throughout the world who profess the true religion.

This great society is a “ Church,” because it is

collected together by the authority of God in the dispensation of the gospel, and solemnly set apart from the world for sacred uses.

This church is “visible,” as distinguished from the “elect of God,” who are known to him alone; and therefore cannot, *as such*, form a separate society among men.

This visible church is “Catholic,” that is, it comprehends all those “throughout the world that profess the true religion.”

If then I am asked what I mean by the “Church?” I answer, that visible catholic society which I have now defined; which is the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ upon earth, where he has deposited his truth, and instituted his ordinances.

The fact that he has founded such a church, I thus demonstrate.

1. It is indisputable that such a church did formerly exist, and that by his own appointment.

The whole of the covenanted seed of Abraham belonged to it. That this “seed” made up the church of God under the law; that it embraced, at least in some periods, thousands and ten thousands within and without the land of Judea, and among them multitudes who never were partakers of saving grace, cannot be doubted. Every one who had the token of God’s covenant in his flesh, whether regenerated or not, was reputed a member of this church. The Jews were scattered, by

several dispersions, through distant lands; yet preserving the name of the God of their fathers, and their profession of adherence to him, they were never considered as cast out of his church. On this ground it was, that on the day of pentecost, “there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of *every nation under heaven*.”\* The old economy was subjected to local restrictions which rendered a universal dispensation impossible while they lasted, but still the “professors of the true religion,” the worshippers of the God of Israel, made up but *one* church. Reside where they might, they all belonged to the **יהוה קהל**, the congregation of the Lord.

If, then, there is no longer any public church visible, what has become of it? Who has annulled, destroyed, blotted it out? Produce a single declaration of its divine author that it should come to an end. The disinheriting of the unhappy Jews is nothing to the purpose, or rather supports the contrary. Their being cast out of the visible church, for they could not be cast out of any other, implies the existence of that church, and the privilege of connexion with her. The abolition of those restrictions which were suited to a preparatory state, fitted her for universality. But that which fitted her for universality could in no sense whatever be her annihilation. The Jews

were not cut off, till after the commencement and establishment of the new dispensation, that is, till after the Gentiles were taken in: therefore the visible church, as an organized whole, subsisted after the commencement of this dispensation, and that among the Gentile Christians. And the excision of the Jews was no more an extermination of the visible church, than the lopping off a diseased branch is felling the whole tree. It is incumbent on them who deny a visible catholic church under the New Testament, to show at what time, by what authority, and by what means, so signal a constitution of God has been laid aside.

2. The Old Testament scriptures proceed on the principle that the visible church state, co-extensive with the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth, was *not* to cease at the introduction of the evangelical dispensation.

There are numerous predictions concerning the church, and numerous promises to her, in her *public* capacity, which are unfulfilled at this hour, and never can be fulfilled, if her visible unity be not asserted. For example: "Esaias saith, there shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles: in him shall the Gentiles trust." Does any man suppose that the "reign" of the Redeemer "over the Gentiles" is confined to those whom his grace has subdued to the "obedience of faith?" And if not, that his king-

dom, destitute of a distinctive mark, is broken down into detached fragments, resembling not a compact community, but a hord of petty democracies? The very idea of a kingdom proves that his church is one, that she is visible, and that this visible unity is one of her essential attributes. If you cut her up into ten thousand pieces, there is no more a kingdom. If you strip her of visible form, you contract her within limits of which Omniscience alone is the judge; you withdraw her from the eyes of men altogether; and shut her up in impenetrable secrecy. Where then is her light? Where her testimony? Where the use of those cautions, precepts, encouragements, which are adapted to her state as *visible*, and have no meaning in any other application?

Thus, “I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream.”\*—“Kings shall be thy nursing-fathers, and their queens thy nursing-mothers.”† “The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising—the abundance of the sea shall be converted into thee; the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.”‡—These are but a very small sample of prophecies which run in the same general strain: and two things are obvious on the bare inspection of them.

• *First*, that they contemplate the church as *one* :

\* Is. lxvi. 12.

† Is. xlix. 23.

‡ Is. lx. 3. 5.

for she is introduced as a single person; and under this idea are they addressed to her.

*Second*—That this unity is not ascribed to her as composed of the elect alone. The Gentiles who should flow into her were not all, nor are pretended to have been, real Christians: that “light” which was to shine upon the Gentiles, and the “brightness” of that “rising” which was to attract the “kings,” must of necessity be *external*: nor could kings be her “nursing-fathers,” nor their queens her “nursing-mothers,” but as a public society which they could *distinguish*. In any other sense the prediction is palpably false.

Further: when he foretells the transition of the dispensation of grace from the Jews to the Gentiles, the prophet uses the same style. He represents the church not as subsisting in a vast multitude of independent associations, but as a great *whole*; as possessing individual unity. He personifies it, as in the former instances: “Sing, O barren, that thou didst not bear: break forth into singing, and cry aloud, that thou didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not; lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.”\*

\* Is. xlv. 1. 2.

This is, unequivocally, a description of the church as exhibited under an outward dispensation. The comparison between the “desolate” and the “married wife,” can have no place in a question concerning the *internal* church, nor do the other circumstances at all agree to her.

Indeed, whoever admits that there was, at any time past, *one* visible church, and that promises were made to her, of which some have had, others are receiving, and others are yet to have, their accomplishment, must of course admit the continuance of that church at present. For the *fulfilling* a promise *to* an individual or a society, supposes the existence of that individual or society. The promises, for example, to Israel, could never have been performed, had Israel perished. The adoption of another family might have been accompanied with other promises, or with the renewal of the old ones: but, in no sense could they be *fulfilled* to a race which was extinct before the time of fulfilment came. The fact, then, that God is *now* fulfilling, and to fulfil *hereafter*, promises given to the visible church ages ago, establishes her perpetuity and identity. She never has been destroyed, or she could not at *this day* enjoy the accomplishment of *ancient* promise

3. The language of the New Testament implies, that an external visible church state *was* not abolished with the law of Moses.



The writers of the New Testament never go about to *prove* that there is a catholic visible church; far less do they speak of it as *originating* in the evangelical dispensation; but they assume its existence, as a point which no Christian in their days ever thought of disputing. They argue against schism, upon the principle that the visible church is one, and they record ecclesiastical deliberations, and decisions by the apostles and elders, which, upon any other principle, were downright usurpation of dominion over conscience. This last particular, will be more fully handled before we have done. Let us, in the mean time, attend to some instances in which this doctrine of the one visible church, is interwoven with the texture of their language.

“This is he that was with the *church* in the wilderness.” Acts vii. 38. Stephen refers to Moses, and we know what church Moses was with. No one, in his right mind, will undertake to say that Moses was with the elect only. “Our fathers,” adds the martyr, “would not obey him.” Moses himself writes that these rebels were the “people”—the “whole congregation”—“all the children of Israel,”\* and this was the “church” to which Stephen refers.

“The Lord added to the *church* daily such as should be saved.” Acts ii. 47. “Saul made

\* Ex. xxxii. Num. xiv.

havoc of the *church*." Ch. viii. 3.—"God hath set some in the *church*; first, apostles," &c. 1 Cor. xii. 28.—"Gaius, the host of the whole *church*." Rom. xvi. 23.—"Give none offence to the *church of God*." 1 Cor. x. 32.—"I persecuted the *church of God*." 1 Cor. xv. 9.

The list might easily be swelled; but it is needless. Let us weigh the import of these passages. The "*church*," to which the Lord daily added such as should be saved, was not the body of the elect, for no addition can be made to them; nor was it a single congregation, unless God had no more people to be saved in Jerusalem, than, together with mere professors, were sufficient for one pastoral charge. Nor is it to be imagined either that Saul confined his persecution to one congregation; or that he was able to pick out the elect, and persecute them. As little can it be suspected, either that Gaius never entertained any but the elect, or that his entertainments never went beyond one congregation. Nor will a sober man allege, that God hath set no officers but in one congregation, or that they have no functions toward any but his elect; or that all whom he hath set are themselves of the number; nor yêt, that "*offence*" can never be given to any but to the elect. The sin, to be committed at all, requires both that the offending and offended, may see and know each other. But the scripture is

express: The Lord added to the *church*—Saul persecuted the *church*—Gaius was the host of the *church*—God hath set officers in the *church*—Christians are not to offend the *church*. Now as these and many similar phrases, are utterly inapplicable either to a single congregation, or to the body of the redeemed, they must designate another and different society, which can be no other than what we have called the visible Church Catholic. Too extensive for partial assemblies, too notorious for any secret election of men, and yet a church; *the church*—it is *general*, *external*, and but ONE.

In truth, the phraseology of the New Testament on this subject, as on many others, is borrowed directly from that of the Old. The expression “church of God,” is a literal translation into English of those Greek words which are themselves a literal translation from the Hebrew. For every scholar knows, that קהל יהוה or האלהים; ἐκκλησία θεού; and “Church of God,” signify in their respective tongues, exactly the same thing. Conceive, then, of an apostle’s addressing himself to Jews, as Paul did, in the Hebrew tongue. By what phrase would he designate the church? Evidently by that which is used in the Hebrew scriptures, and was familiar to his hearers. And what sense could they put upon it? Evidently that which had long been settled, and no other Would

the Jews, then, have understood him as meaning by “the church,” either a section of their nation no bigger than could be contained within the walls of a synagogue? or those favoured ones whom God has predestined to life? The thing is impossible! because he would use the current phraseology of both their holy and their popular language in a sense quite different from any which had formerly been affixed to it. They would understand him as discoursing of that great visible society which God had publicly set apart for himself.

Conceive again of the apostle as addressing Gentiles on this subject, and speaking Greek. He would evidently express himself in the terms which he *has* used in his epistles. What ἐκκλησία (*ecclesia*) means, every Grecian could tell. But how was a Heathen to understand the meaning of ἐκκλησία θεοῦ (*ecclesia theou*,) or the “church of God?” He was perfectly ignorant of Christian doctrine, and the structure of Christian congregations. Nor could he form any correct notion of the thing intended, without an explanation drawn from the Old Testament scriptures.

The result stands thus: The apostle, when preaching or writing to Jews or Gentiles, speaks of the church of God in terms well known to the one, and entirely new to the other. The alternative is obvious. Either he used these terms in

their ascertained sense, or not. If the former, he has recognized the visible unity of the Church Catholic; and so our position is proved. If the latter, he deceived all his hearers; all his correspondents; all who in every age adopt his letters as a rule of faith. Undoubtedly, had he used the terms "church" and "church of God" in a sense unknown to Moses and the Fathers, he would not have omitted to mention it; that we might not be led into error. But the fact is, that there is not throughout the New Testament any exposition of these terms. They are employed as terms of the most definite import; as terms which no one who chose to consult the earlier scriptures could mistake. The law of interpretation to the primitive Christians must, of course, be our law; and the same issue returns upon us; the expression "church of God," used without qualification, means an external society comprehending all those who profess the true religion.

If any one think that too much stress is laid upon the coincidence between the phraseology of the two Testaments, let him reflect, not only that they relate to a common whole; but that the same coincidence happens in other things. Thus, "Christ," is but the English form of *Χριστός*, which is the literal translation of *מָשִׁיחַ*, (Messiah) all signifying "the anointed." When, therefore, the Lord Jesus was proclaimed as the "Christ of

God," how could either Jew or Gentile understand the preacher but by going back to the Old Testament? There the word was perfectly familiar, although, in its sacred sense, utterly unknown to the Heathen. And this explains why a profession that "Jesus is the Christ," was deemed, in the first age of the church, a sufficient criterion of one's religion. No man could make it without being instructed, from the scriptures of the Old Testament, in the Redeemer's character and work. The reason why many now suppose such a profession extremely easy, is, that they do not perceive its relation to truths previously revealed. And this, too, is the reason why there is so much blundering about the nature of the church. People imagine themselves at liberty to interpret the word at their pleasure: whereas it is referrible to the Old Testament as really as the word "Christ." Neither the nature of the church, nor the office of her head, is to be understood without an appeal to the same scriptures. Consequently, that very rule which expounds "the Christ of God," as signifying one who was qualified by the father's appointment, and by the measureless communication of the divine Spirit, to be a Saviour for men; will oblige us to expound the "church of God," as signifying that great visible society which professes his name.

4. The account which the New Testamen

gives of the church, confirms the doctrine of her visible unity.

One of the most common appellations by which she is there distinguished, is, “the kingdom of heaven.” This can be but one: or else it would not be *a* kingdom, and *the* kingdom, but several. And this one must be visible, because its ordinances are administered by visible agency.\* Nay it is only *as visible* that it admits of the exercise of any part of its government by men. The church invisible, which eludes every human sense and faculty, cannot be the object of human functions. And to preclude mistake in this matter, our Lord informs us that his kingdom, while in the world, shall, like other kingdoms, have false as well as true subjects. That hypocrites shall so intermingle with saints as to render their separation in the present life impossible by any means which will not exterminate both. Such is the manifest import of the parable of the “tares.” Mat. xiii. 24—30.

An attempt has, indeed, been made, to repel this argument, by supposing the parable to represent, not the mixture of Christians with hypocrites in *the church*, but their mixture with wicked men in *civil Society*. Let us see:

The parable is a likeness of “the kingdom of heaven.” A phrase which never signifies the

\* Mat. xvi. 19. xxviii. 19, 20. John xx. 21—23.

world at large, or civil society; but the church of God under the evangelical dispensation. There was no need to teach the disciples, by a symbolical lesson, that good men and bad are mingled together in civil society. This had been sufficiently attested by the experience of all previous ages, and was at that very moment evident to their eyes. But considering the expectations which they might be led to form from the introduction of a spiritual economy, it was altogether needful to apprise them that in her best estate, in her noblest appearance as the kingdom of Heaven, the church would be still imperfect, and injured by unworthy members. Nor could the officers of Christ, answering to the “servants of the householder,” ever entertain so wild an idea as that of severing Christians from the society of other men; for were it even practicable, it would defeat one of the high ends for which they live in the world; that of “letting their light shine before others;” and would gradually extirpate them from the face of the earth. But it would be very natural for the disciples to imagine that, with the keys of the kingdom of Heaven in their hands, they should endeavour to exclude every one whom they had reason to suspect of insincerity. Many are infected with such a notion to this day. No rotten hearted professor shall pollute their communion! they will rest the right of admission



upon the *reality* of conversion! And some waste their lives in pursuit of that chimera, a perfect church! Nor have either the admonitions of Christ, nor the rough tuition of disappointment, cured them of their folly. There was, therefore, much cause for guarding his disciples against so imposing an error. And he has taught them that there are no human means of effecting a complete expulsion of the unconverted from his church: that the attempt would destroy his own people: and, therefore, that they must be left, like the tares and the wheat, to “grow together until the harvest.” Then, that is, at “the end of the world,” he will “send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of”—what? Civil society? No, but out of “*his kingdom*, all things that offend; and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”—v. 41, 42.

To the same amount is the parable of the net, in verses 47—50. “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind.” Is this, too, a description of civil society? It is evident, that “the sea,” with its swarms of fishes, represents the world with its multitudes of men. Like a net cast into the former, the kingdom of heaven introduced among the latter, gathers a mixed assemblage from the common mass. And as it is impossible,

while the net is in the waters, to divide the good fish from the bad ; so it is impossible, while the kingdom of heaven exists here among men, to divide saints from hypocrites. The alternative is alike in the type, and the thing typified. The net must be drawn “to shore,” before the fish can be distributed ; the kingdom of heaven must close ; “the end of the world” must come, before “the wicked can be severed from among the just.” Nothing can be clearer, than that mankind at large correspond, in the parable, with the fish of the sea ; consequently, that the kingdom of heaven, which, like a net thrown into the sea, gathers a *selection* from among men, cannot possibly mean civil society. To make this out, it should be proved that the net catches *all* the fish wherever it is cast into the sea.

To crown this argument ; the kingdom of heaven is likened unto “ten virgins, of whom five were wise, and five were foolish.”\* This also must mean “civil society,” or the hypothesis we are considering is ruined. But what man in his senses will venture upon so extravagant an assertion? *All* these virgins professed to belong to the train of the bridegroom—*All* the members of civil society make no such profession. It is wasting words to press the point further. This notion of the state of civil society being represented by the

\* Mat. xxv. 1.

parable of the tares, &c. is a fable invented in order to get rid of a troublesome truth : and adds another to the numberless examples already given by zeal without knowledge, of its being much easier to contradict the scriptures, than to explain them. The sum is,

That the kingdom of heaven cannot designate the election of grace ; because no one belonging to that will be “ cast into the furnace of fire.”— We have proved that it cannot signify the state of civil society, and it would be superlatively ridiculous to confine it to a single congregation ; therefore,

It must mean the *external Visible Church*, which, according to the conditions of description, can be but ONE.

If we proceed a little further, we shall meet with the same thing under a different form. The apostle Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthian Christians, chap. xii. treats at length, of the various gifts which the Holy Spirit had bestowed upon various individuals. He argues that these gifts ought to be no ground of dissention, for these two reasons : *first*, that they were all of the same divine original ; and *secondly*, that they all contributed to the common good, and most effectually by retaining each its appropriate place. The latter reason is illustrated by the analogy of the human body ; and winds up with declaring—

“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” The question is, what are we to understand by the “body of Christ?”

That it signifies a *whole*, is as plain as that words signify any thing. Then, *what* whole? Not the church at Corinth, far less a particular congregation, unless the commission of the apostles and the use of all spiritual gifts, extend no further.

Not the church of the elect; for there are no “schisms” in that body, as *such*. A schism which cannot be perceived is no schism; and the moment you render it perceptible, you are in a visible church. Nor can it be affirmed, but at the expense of all fact and consistency, that God hath set no officers except in the church of his redeemed. For, upon that supposition, no church officer could ever exercise his office toward any non-elected man; the pastoral relation could never be fixed without knowing beforehand who are the elected of God; or else, no person, however blasphemous and abominable, could be kept out of a church, because such “blasphemer and injurious” may possibly be “a chosen vessel.” These are absurdities.

But a body, a church there is, in which “God hath set, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers,” &c. An individual congregation it is not. A partial coalescence of congrega-

gations, it is not. The "church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven," it is not : and yet it is a church ; *the* church to which God hath given his ordinances. There is no escape ; it can be no other than what we have called the *Visible Church Catholic*.

The reader has been more inattentive than it would be fair to suspect of any who shall peruse these sheets, if he has not remarked, that all the *means of salvation* are external. The scriptures, the sabbath, the solemn assembly, the sacraments, the ministry ; in a word, the whole system of instituted worship, is visible. Now, is it not a most incredible thing, that the church and the ordinances committed to her, should be of opposite natures ? Or rather, that the ordinances should have a solid, external existence, and the church to which they are given, no such existence at all ! A visible bible, visible ministry, visible worship, visible sacraments, visible discipline, and no visible church ! Nothing but a phantom, a metaphysical idea, as the repository of God's truth and institutions ! One fact in the history of revelation, is enough to dispel these visions. It will not be controverted that the scriptures are God's testimony to his church. But more than one half of this testimony was delivered to the Israelites in their public covenanted character ; for "unto them were committed the oracles of God." Unto

whom, then, have the subsequent scriptures been committed? “Unto the New Testament Church,” you will say. Agreed. But the question falls back upon you, what is the New Testament Church? If she is not the very same great society which God formerly erected for the praise of his glory, and has caused to pass under a new form of dispensation, three consequences follow :

1st, That the Old Testament is no part of the trust deposited with her, and belongs not to the rule of her faith.

2d. That God has divided his testimony between two churches of the most different nature ; and of which one has long been extinct. Therefore,

3d. That the whole scriptures, as the testimony of God, never were, nor can be, committed to any church whatever, unless in virtue of another special revelation.

But if, on the contrary, these scriptures are the testimony of God deposited with his church, then it irresistibly follows, that she is now, and ever has been, since her first organization, a public visible society which God has appropriated to himself; where his name is known, and his mercies are vouchsafed.

And, indeed, the general principle of the church visible is so inseparable from the Christian style and doctrine, that its most strenuous opposers are unconsciously admitting it every hour of their

lives. They talk habitually of “the church; the faith of the church; the worship of the church; the sufferings of the church; God’s dealings with his church,” and a thousand things of like import. Let them ask what they mean by such expressions? They will not say, “a particular congregation;” and if they say “the election of grace,” they will speedily contradict themselves, and fact, and the word of God too. Their whole language, as Christians, is accommodated to the very thing, which, in form, they renounce. There is no getting along without it. No ingenuity can enable them to converse five minutes together about the church of God, as existing on earth, without the introduction of an idea different from either of those which they affix to that term: and this third idea, if they will be at the trouble to analyze it, will turn out to be no other than that of the *Visible Church Catholic*.

We have now developed our views of that phrase, “the church,” and assigned our reasons for them: the reader will, therefore, recollect, when he meets with it in the course of our disquisitions, that we mean by it the aggregate body of those who profess the true religion: all making up but *ONE* Society, of which the Bible is the statute book; Jesus Christ the head; and a covenant relation the uniting bond.

# CHURCH OF GOD.

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## No. II.

### *On its first Organization.*

IN the preceding number we have proved the existence of a *Visible Church Catholic* ; and that this is the thing intended by such spiritual phrases as “ the Church of God,” “ the house of God,” “ the kingdom of heaven.” But it does not more certainly exist, than it exists in virtue of a divine interposition. None but the living God could set up, protect, and govern, his own kingdom. The question is, when, and where, and how, so singular a society was instituted ? The question is of moment, as being connected with interesting views of the external economy of salvation. Let us attempt to answer it.

We know by experience that the church of God was in the world before us. So did our fathers. So did the previous generation : and in this manner the historical fact may be deduced from the days of the apostles. The “ Church,”



therefore, has not been created since their days. Was it created then ? No : the apostles found it, as we found it, older than themselves. Their writings are full of its privileges, its ordinances, and other peculiarities ; but contain not a single hint of its *originating* with them. They uniformly *suppose* its prior establishment, and speak of it as having been long and familiarly understood. Guided by the clue which they have put into our hands, we go back to the books of the prophets, and meet the same supposition there. We proceed, with similar success, through the Levitical law, and the Sinai-covenant ; we pass the age of Moses, and arrive at the *Father of the faithful*. Here the clue runs out. No ingenuity can follow it further. People of God there were ; promises of God there were ; gracious revelations, and acceptable worship of God, there were : but a *Church of God*, organized upon the principle of *visible unity*, and standing in such relation to him as it did in after ages ; such a Church, before the vocation of Abram, there was not, nor any thing which bore the semblance of it. For its original organization ; for the germ of that great system into which it has already grown, and shall yet grow, we must look among the transactions of that memorable period which elapsed between the call of Abram in Ur of the Chaldees, and the birth of his son Isaac.

On the first of these occasions Jehovah gave him a double promise :

1. A promise of a numerous progeny, and great personal prosperity. *I will make of thee a great nation ; and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing ; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.—Gen. xii. 2, 3.*

2. The promise of his being a medium of conveying extensive blessings to the world. *In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.—v. 3.*

All the subsequent communications which God made to him are referrible to one of these two promises. They were both called up at different intervals, explained, expanded, and confirmed, till each of them became the basis of an appropriate *covenant*. Let us briefly mark their progress.

1. The promise of a numerous progeny is repeated with an engagement to bestow upon them the land of Canaan, ch. xii. 7. This promise was stated and confirmed in the most precise and ample terms, after Abram had separated from Lot, ch. xiii. 14. 17. And finally, as he was advancing in years, and the probability of its accomplishment was proportionably diminishing, the Lord “came to him in a vision,” and having cheered him with this gracious assurance, *I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward*, ch. xv. 1,

renewed the promise concerning his seed, as that which should come forth out of his own bowels and be multiplied as the stars of heaven. The patriarch on this occasion so glorified the divine veracity by his unshaken, unquestioning faith, that the scripture saith, *it was counted to him for righteousness*, verse 6. The renewed promise concerning his progeny was immediately followed by a confirmation of the grant of Canaan; and a remarkable pledge that the grant should be executed in due season. Having, as he had been commanded, slain several animals, divided their bodies, and placed the sections opposite to each other, his senses were locked up to every other object, and Jehovah disclosed to him a comprehensive view of evils to come upon his family before their possession of the promised land. But their possession at the proper time was guaranteed by solemn compact. “A burning lamp,” the symbol of the divine presence, “passed between those pieces” of the slain animals, in token of ratifying every stipulation belonging to the promise in question. For *in that same day, the Lord made a COVENANT with Abram, saying, “Unto thy seed have I given this land,” &c. v. 8—21.*

Here is an end of all transactions for establishing the first promise. It was sealed in the *covenant*, and never again occurs by itself. The end of this covenant, too well defined to be mistaken,

was to secure to Abram a numerous posterity, and their inheritance in the land of Canaan. Further it went not. It does not so much as mention the promise relating to the families of the earth being blessed in him. And from the minuteness with which every thing else is adjusted, it is evident that this last promise, not even hinted at, was not intended to be comprised in the covenant which secured the other. Let us proceed then.

2. Fourteen years after the date of this covenant, Jehovah appeared again to Abram, and made another covenant with him. The transaction is thus recorded in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis: *And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee; and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a FATHER OF MANY NATIONS. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham: for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee; and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations,*

*for an everlasting covenant ; to be A GOD UNTO THEE, AND TO THY SEED AFTER THEE. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession ; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee ; Every man-child among you shall be CIRCUMCISED. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin ; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations ; he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is NOT OF THY SEED. He that is born in thy house and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised : and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people ; he hath broken my covenant, ver. 1—14.*

Our inquiry is into the nature and design of this covenant. What was it ?

Not a covenant, either of works or grace, for eternal life. For Abram had been “justified by faith, without the works of the law,” and had been interested in the covenant of God’s grace

before this. His eternal life had been secured many years.

Nor was it merely a personal or domestic covenant: that is, one which provided for the individual dignity of the patriarch, and the prosperous settlement of his children in the land of Canaan. This, too, had been concluded long before, as has been shown. It recognizes, indeed, all that was included in the personal covenant, which it might otherwise be supposed to supersede; but it has features of its own so peculiar and marked, that it cannot be considered in any other light than that of a distinct engagement.

For, besides the solemnity with which it was introduced, and which would hardly have preceded a mere repetition of former grants, it contained new matter; it constituted new relations; and was affirmed in an extraordinary manner.

1st. It contained new *matter*—*I will make thee a father of many nations*: which is much more than can be interpreted of Abram's literal posterity; and must be viewed as expounding the promise and extending the privilege formerly assured to him—*In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*. It was a great thing to be only an instrument of blessing to all the families of the earth; but a much greater to be that instrument in such a manner as to become what no other man, in the sense of the covenant, ever did, or ever can be-

come, “a *father* of many nations:” and moreover, a personal pledge, also, of his new dignity was conferred upon the patriarch, in that remarkable alteration of his name from Abram to Abraham; the former signifying *high Father*; and the latter, *high Father of a multitude*.

2d. It constituted new relations—*To be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee*. This cannot be explained of Abraham’s relation to God as the God of his salvation; for in that sense God was his God long before; and whatever is the relation expressed, it grew out of the covenant *now made*; It embraced his *seed* too. Nor, with respect to *their* eternal life, did God now engage to be their God; for all that was adjusted in the covenant of grace; and the privilege could not reach beyond those who were the actual partakers of the same precious faith with Abraham. Whereas, in the sense of *this* covenant, God was the God of all Abraham’s seed, without exception, under the limitations which restricted the covenant operation first to Isaac, and afterwards to Jacob, including such as should choose their God, their faith, and their society. For he was to be their God in *their generations*: i. e. as soon as a new individual of this seed was generated, he was within the covenant; and according to the tenour of the covenant, God was his God.\*

\* The expressions “thy God,” “my God,” “our God,” and that, so much and so properly in use among Christians, “our

The foregoing retrospect has decided one point, to wit, that *the covenant with Abraham and his seed, contemplated them not primarily nor immediately, as of the election of grace, but as an aggregate which it severed from the bulk of mankind; and placed in a social character under peculiar relations to the most high God.* To define precisely the nature of this constitution, we must go a step further, and ascertain who are meant by “the seed.”

It cannot be the carnal descendants of Abraham exclusively; although it has a particular respect to them, for,

(1.) Three large branches of that seed were actually shut out of the covenant, i. e. the children of Ishmael, of Esau, and of Keturah.

covenant God,” must always be interpreted according to the nature of the covenant to which they refer. Common, but unwarranted practice, has limited them to the covenant of grace; so that a serious man is apt to think he hears heresy, if they be ever applied to any thing else than the saving relation in which a believer stands to God as his reconciled God in Christ Jesus. But this is a mistake; and lies at the foundation of many false and hurtful opinions of the Christian Church and its privileges. The Jews could, *nationally*, call God “their God:” They often did so, and with right, when they were gross hypocrites in the article of their personal religion. The Sinai-covenant constituted them the people of Jehovah, and him their God, as really, but in a widely different sense, as he was the covenant God of Abraham, or of Paul, for personal salvation. A due exposition of this matter involves the whole doctrine of the visible church catholic, which is grievously misunderstood by most professing Christians of all denominations.



(2.) The covenant provided for the admission of others, who never belonged to that seed. *He that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you ; every man-child in your generations : he that is born in the house or bought with money of any stranger, which is NOT OF THY SEED.*

This principle was acted upon under the constitution which was superadded, by the ministry of Moses, 430 years after. The stranger who wished to keep the passover, was required first to circumcise all his males, and then he became as *one born in the land*, i. e. he was to all intents and purposes under the full operation of the covenant established with Abraham and his seed. On the other hand, the Edomite, *who sprung from the loins of Abraham*, was put upon the *same footing* with the Egyptian who descended from Ham: the children of both were received in the fourth generation; neither of them came in upon the plea of consanguinity with Abraham: nor were they admitted into the commonwealth of Israel under the idea of the children of Israel having Abraham for their literal father, but formally and explicitly upon the ground of their being "*the congregation of the Lord.*" Deut. xxiii. 8.\* But, being once incor-

\* קהל יהוה "The church of Jehovah:" the very expression which is translated again and again in the New Testament, εκκλησια θεου, "the church of God." The fact is, that all our language in sacred things is borrowed from the Old Testament; and

porated with the natural seed, in that great congregation, they, too, were viewed as of the covenanted seed; and they transmitted their privilege to their children in their generations.

(3.) By the covenant made with Abraham he acquired the prerogative of being the “*father of many nations.*” This article is, of itself, a demonstration that the covenant was of a much wider extent than all the literal descendants of Abraham in the line of Jacob put together. They never did make but *one* nation. There is a marked distinction between them and these “many nations;” who are evidently the same with “all the families of the earth,” that were to be blessed in Abraham. The apostle Paul interprets the phrase by another; his being “the *heir of the world;*” and peremptorily denies its restriction to the literal seed. *Rom.* iv. 13, 16, 17.

The argument is short. Abraham’s seed comprehends all those to whom he is the father: but he is the father of many nations; therefore, these many nations are to be accounted as his seed. Again: the covenant was made with Abraham and with his seed: therefore, the covenant embraced cannot be understood without a reference to it; and those who clamorously demand the origin of every thing Christian to be produced from the New Testament, show that they understand neither the New Testament nor the Old, nor yet that very Christianity about which they prate. Christianity is more, a great deal more than a few doctrines.

ced these many nations who are included in his seed.

3. This covenant was affirmed in an extraordinary manner; *viz.* by the rite of *circumcision* *This, saith God, is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee, every man-child among you shall be circumcised.* The uses of this rite were two.

*First.* It certified to the seed of Abraham, by a token in the flesh of their males, that the covenant with their great progenitor was in force; that they were under its full operation; and entitled to all the benefits immediately derived from it. But circumcision had a further use; for,

*Secondly,* The apostle Paul informs us that it was *a seal of the* RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE FAITH *which Abraham had, being yet uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that* RIGHTEOUSNESS MIGHT BE IMPUTED *unto them also.* *Rom. iv. 11.* In this connexion it certified,

That Abraham was justified by *faith*.

That the doctrine and the privilege of the “righteousness of faith,” were to be perpetuated among his seed by the operation of God’s covenant with him :

That the justification of a sinner is by faith alone; “righteousness” being “imputed” to all them that *believe*,” and to them only; who by the

very fact of their *believing*, become, in the highest sense, children of Abraham, and are accordingly blessed with him.

While, therefore, the sign of circumcision was in every circumcised person, a seal of God's covenant with Abraham and with his seed, it was to all who walked in the faith of Abraham a seal of their personal interest in that same righteousness by which Abraham was justified.

From these general premises the conclusion is direct and irrefragable, that the covenant with Abraham was designed to assure the accomplishment of the second great promise made to him while he was yet in Ur of the Chaldees ; and that the effect of it was to bring him and his family, with all who should join them in a kindred profession, *into a church estate*, i. e. was a *covenant ecclesiastical*, by which Jehovah organized the visible church, as one distinct spiritual society ; and according to which all his after dealings with her were to be regulated. Hitherto she had been scattered, and existed in detached parts. Now it was the gracious intention of God to reduce her into a compact form that she might be prepared for the good things to come. Since Abraham was designated as the man from whom the MESSIAH was to spring ; since he had signally glorified the Lord's veracity, not staggering at his promise through unbelief, he selected this his servant as

the favoured man in whose family he would commence the organization of that church in which he designed to perpetuate the righteousness of faith. With this church, as with a *whole*, composed, in the first instance, of Abraham's family, and to be increased afterwards by the addition of all such as should own his faith, was the covenant made. This is that covenant after which we are inquiring.

II. This covenant has never been annulled. The proof of the affirmative lies upon the affirmer. When? Where? and by whom was the act for annulling it promulged? The "vanishing away" of the ceremonial law has nothing to do with the Abrahamic covenant, but to illustrate, confirm, and diffuse its blessings. The former was a temporary constitution superadded for the purpose of giving effect to some provisions of the latter, and expired by its own limitation. The apostle Paul refutes the notion that the introduction of the ceremonial law, could at all prejudice the pre-existing covenant with Abraham: *Gal. iii. 15—17*. And if not its commencement, why its termination? And if the abolishing of the ceremonial law does not infer the cessation of the Abrahamic covenant, there is not a shadow of either proof or presumption that it has ceased. If there is, let it be produced. But not to rest the matter here, we may observe,

1st. That the promise of Abraham's being a father of many nations, who are, therefore, his seed, never was, nor could be fulfilled, before the Christian dispensation. The apostle Paul was certainly of this mind ; for he proves the calling of the Gentiles from Abraham's covenant ; and if the calling of the Gentiles to be fellow-heirs in the church of God with the literal descendants of the patriarch, was grounded upon his covenant, this, again, shows that they belong to that seed with whom it was made ; and, consequently, that it is in full force and virtue at this hour. The apostle presses this point with great ardour ; and places it before us in various lights. *If ye be Christ's*, says he, "*then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*" What promise ? Not simply the promise of eternal life in Christ. There was no *necessity* of their being Abraham's seed to inherit this promise—but manifestly, the promise of Abraham's covenant to which they were entitled in virtue of their being his seed : i. e. the promise, *I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee*. If, then, they who are Christ's are Abraham's seed ; and being so are heirs according to the promise ; the covenant, containing the promise, is in full virtue, as they belong to the seed with which it was made.

2d. If the Abrahamic covenant is no longer in force, the church of God, as a visible public so-

ciety, is not, in any sense, connected with him by covenant relation. This may weigh light with those who discard the doctrine of a visible Catholic church ; but it draws much deeper than they suspect. The whole administration of the covenant of grace proceeds upon the principle that there *is* such a church. All the ordinances are given to it ; all the promises are made to it. To the elect, as such, they are not, cannot be given. The application of them would be impossible without a special revelation : and the whole administration of the covenant of grace, by visible means, would be at an end. Nor is a single instance to be found, excepting in virtue of immediate revelation, in which the Lord ever gave an ordinance or a promise to particular churches. They always receive their privileges in virtue of their being parts of the church universal. Now this church universal, which is the body of Christ, the temple of his Spirit, the depository of his grace, stands in no covenant relation to God, in her public character, if the covenant with Abraham is annulled. For if she does, then another covenant has been made with her. But no such covenant has been made. The new covenant which the Lord promised to make with her at the introduction of the evangelical dispensation, was to supersede, not the Abrahamic, but the Sinai-covenant. It is so far from setting aside,

that it implies, and establishes the former ; for it is promised to her as that church which was organized and perpetuated under Abraham's covenant. If, therefore, that covenant is removed, and no other has replaced it, the church, in her social capacity, is further off from God than she was under the law ; and all the mercies to which, in that capacity, she once had a claim, are swept away. But this is impossible. In fact, the scriptures uniformly suppose the existence of such public federal relations : and abound with promises growing out of them. Thus speaks the prophet—"The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my *covenant with them*, saith the Lord : my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever."—*Is.* lix. 21, 22.

This is a prediction of New Testament times : so the apostle applies it, *Rom.* xi. 26. And he applies it to the recovery of the Jews, which has not yet happened. The covenant, therefore, is in force, and it operates through the medium of Gentile converts ; the Lord's Spirit has long ago departed out of the mouth of the Jews. But the promise was made to the church, in her *covenanted*



*character* ; her members in constant succession are the “seed” out of whose mouth the divine Spirit shall not depart ; and when the Jews are restored, they will be brought into this very covenanted church, and be again recognized as a part of the “seed.” But why multiply words ? There is no explaining the frequent recurrence of the inspired writers to the covenant of Abraham, nor any propriety in their reasoning, if it is not of perpetual operation.

3d. In discussing the great question concerning the rejection of the Jews, the vocation of the Gentiles, and the future restoration of the former, the apostle reasons upon principles which are most false and impertinent, if the Abrahamic covenant has ceased. *Rom. xi. 17—24.*

He tells the Gentiles, that they were “a wild olive tree ;” and that the Jews were the “good olive tree”—This cannot refer to their natural state as sinners before God ; for in this respect there was “no difference”—nor to their state as sinners saved by grace : for from this state there is no excision ; it can refer to nothing but their visible *church estate* ; i. e. to their public relation to God as a covenanted society. What, then, was this “good olive tree,” from which the Jewish branches were “broken off ;” while the Gentiles were “grafted in ?” Evidently the visible church organized under the covenant made with Abra-

ham. There was no other from which the Jews could be cast off. The ceremonial law was superseded. It was no excision at all to be cut off from a church which did not exist; nor could the Gentiles be introduced into it. But what says the apostle? That the "olive tree" was cut down or rooted up? That it had withered trunk and branch? Or was no longer the care of the divine planter? Nothing like it! He asserts the continuance of the olive tree in life and vigour; the excision of some worthless branches; and the insertion of new ones in their stead. "Thou," says he, addressing the Gentile, "partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree." Translate this into less figurative language, and what is the import? That the church of God, his visible church, taken into peculiar relations to himself by the Abrahamic covenant, subsists without injury through the change of dispensation and of members. Branches indeed may be cut off, but the rooted trunk stands firm, and other branches occupy the places of those which are lopped away. The Jews are cast out of the church, but the church perished not with them. There was still left the trunk of the olive tree; there was still fatness in its roots: it stands in the same fertile soil, the covenant of God: and the admission of the Gentiles into the room of the excommunicated Jews, makes them a part of that covenanted church;

as branches grafted into the olive tree and flourishing in its fatness, are identified with the tree. It is impossible for ideas conceived by the mind of man, or uttered in his language, to assert more peremptorily the continuance of the church under that very covenant which was established with Abraham and his seed. And this doctrine, understood before the apostleship of Paul, was maintained by John the Baptist; "*Think not,*" cried he to the multitudes who crowded around him, "*think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father : for verily I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*" The hearers of the Baptist, like many modern professors of Christianity, supposed that the duration of the covenant with Abraham, and of the prerogative of the Jews as God's peculiar people, were the same. It is a mistake, replies the second Elijah ; you may all be cast off ; you may all perish ; but the oath to Abraham shall not be violated. God will be at no loss to provide " seed " who shall be as much within his covenant as yourself, even though he should create them out of the stones of the earth. The threat was vain : it was empty noise ; it was turning the thunders of God into a scarecrow for children, if the covenant with Abraham was not to survive the law of peculiarity, and be replenished with other seed than that which sprung from his loins according to the flesh.

## CHURCH OF GOD.

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### No. III.

#### *On the mode of perpetuating the Visible Church.*

It has been shown, in the preceding number, that the covenant with Abraham and his seed, was an *ecclesiastical* covenant ; i. e. was made with the *visible church*, and is of equal duration. We proceed to another and very important part of our inquiry. *How were the covenant character and privilege to be transmitted from one age to another, till the consummation of all things ? Or, which is the same, how was a succession of the “ seed ” to be preserved ?*

This was to be accomplished in two ways.

1st. In all cases of original connexion with the church ; that is, where the individual was without the bond of the covenant, previous to his being of adult age, he was to be admitted on his *personal faith* in that religion which the covenant was instituted to secure. This term of communion with the people of God has never varied. It remains, at the present hour, precisely what it was at the

formation of the Abrahamic covenant. They who do not enjoy, or have not embraced, the gospel, are "without." They are "strangers," "foreigners," "aliens," "afar off," and must continue such till they come to the knowledge of the truth. No Jewish or Pagan foot must cross the threshold of the church, without "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." About this there is no dispute. About the qualifications requisite in adults for their admission to the privileges of the church, there is not the same agreement.

Some think that a general profession of Christianity is all which she may exact ; alleging in support of their opinion, the example of the apostles, who demanded, say they, nothing more than a confession that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God* ; and therefore they conclude that nothing more ought to be demanded now.

But it is not to be denied that this proposition contains the substance of all the doctrines and predictions of the Old Testament, concerning the Redeemer's person and work. No man could give it his intelligent assent, without a knowledge of those doctrines and predictions ; nor repose his hope upon their truth, without that divine faith which receives the *whole* testimony of God, and operates, with a purifying influence, upon the heart and life. The scriptures refer the existence

of such a confession, when not hypocritical, to a much higher cause, and attribute to the confession itself much stronger effects, than are even thought of by those who, at this day, would establish it as the all-comprehending term of Christian fellowship. “I give you to understand,” says Paul, 1 Cor. xii. 3. “that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but *by the Holy Ghost*.”—And John 1, Ep. v. 1. 5. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is *born of God*.”—“Who is he that *overcometh the world*, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.” It is evident, upon the very face of these passages, that nothing was further from the mind and the practice of the Apostles, than the recognizing as Christians and the admitting into Christian fellowship, all or any who barely assented to the general proposition, that “Jesus is the Christ.” Much less can such an admission be justifiable now, when millions learn, from mere habit, to repeat that proposition without weighing its sense, or even comprehending its terms. Christianity is not a thing of *rote*. And there can be no doubt, that multitudes would flock to the church, reiterating as often as you would wish, their belief that “Jesus is the Christ;” who should, nevertheless, be found, upon a strict examination, to be either ignorant, or enemies, of every truth comprehended in their own creed. This cannot be. Christianity is not chargeable

with the madness of cherishing in her own bosom, and that designedly, the seeds of her own destruction.

Some think that soundness in the doctrines of revelation, without scrutiny into practical character, or, at least, without solicitude on that point, is sufficient to justify admission into the church, and to the enjoyment of her privileges.

This opinion is not more correct than the former. It strips the church of her responsibility on the score of moral purity; annihilates her duties with regard to the chief end of her creation; viz. that she might be the mother of a holy seed, of a "peculiar people, zealous of good works;" dis-severs the connexion between faith in Christ and conformity to his image; and acts, not indeed upon the notion that provided a man's life be good, his faith is a matter of indifference; but upon its converse, equally absurd and abominable, that a right belief may dispense with the obligations of holiness.

Some think, that doctrinal soundness combined with fair morals, fixes the limit of our inquiries. This opinion, though far preferable to the others, labours, notwithstanding, under a material defect. It shuts out investigation of the history of a man's heart and conscience; in other words, of his religious experience. This must certainly form a part of his profession which is to be tried by the

rules of the written word. The gospel, if received in truth, has revolutionized his soul. It has taught him to hate sin, his own sin, and to abhor himself for it before God—It has taught him to renounce dependence upon his own righteousness; abjuring it, in every form and degree, as the ground of his acceptance with his judge; to rest, with absolute and exclusive reliance, upon the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ; and to live by faith upon him as the Lord his strength. They who have but slightly attended to facts, need not be told that it is very possible, and very common, to have a speculative orthodoxy and an unstained reputation, with as complete an absence of the whole of this spiritual efficacy of the gospel upon the heart, as if no such thing were either mentioned in the bible or existed in our world. And it would be strange indeed, if the church of God, in admitting men to her distinguished privileges, should never ask a question concerning the most glorious and only saving effect of that very gospel which her members are supposed to believe.

Some, in fine, think that religious experience is the sole test of admission into the church. Provided a man can satisfy them of his conversion, and they are not always hard to be satisfied; if he can relate a plausible story of his feelings; can talk of his distress, and of his comfort; and has learnt to deal in joys and ecstasies, it is enough



How he came by his experience, he probably cannot tell, and his spiritual guides often omit to ask. And yet this is a point upon which often turns the discrimination between true and false in religion; between rational experience and fanaticism; between the good influences of the Spirit of God, and their counterfeits. It is lamentable that so large a proportion of conversions, which are the fruit of tumultuous meetings, and the theme of newspaper praise, prove to be of this class. Dark views, gross ignorance, and even flat contradictions in the simplest truths of Christianity, are no obstacle. Thousands go from sin to God; from nature to grace; from condemnation to pardon; from despondency to rapture; and when interrogated about the *process* by which this marvellous transition was accomplished, have little or nothing to say, but that *they have felt so!* And, what is still more astonishing, they have been “translated from darkness to light,” without being illuminated! For the uttering of incoherent exclamations, and the chattering over a set of phrases, though accompanied with vehement passion, with shrieks and fallings, and faintings, and fits, and trances, must not pass for divine illumination, nor divine influence of any sort. When we consider the mechanism of the human affections, and how rapidly emotion is propagated, by sympathy, through promiscuous crowds, we can explain all the phe

nomena which, in this matter, have lately attracted the public wonder, without recourse to supernatural agency; and must be convinced that nothing can be more precarious than the tenure by which these sudden converts hold their profession. And although many, to whom, therefore, these remarks will not apply, disclaim that wild frenzy which others have rashly mistaken for an effusion of the divine Spirit, yet it is not easy to make *mere* experience the rule of estimating Christian character, and of admitting to Christian privilege; and at the same time keep clear of extravagances. For let the imagination, freed from the restraint of purified reason, be once excited; let it be impelled by a fervid but blind devotion, and it will rush, with resistless impetuosity, into excesses fit only to dishonour the Christian name, and to desolate the Christian church.—Wherever the understanding is dismissed from religion, nothing but mischief can ensue; and this is always done, in a greater or less degree, where the exercises of the heart are assumed as the basis of our judgment without ascertaining their dependence upon knowledge.

Upon the whole we may conclude, that an adult, in order to his right reception into the Christian church,

Must be acquainted with, at least, the leading doctrines of revelation:

Must be able to “give a reason of the hope that is in him,” by showing that these doctrines have operated upon his experience :

Must make an open, unequivocal avowal of the Redeemer’s name : and,

Must be vigilant in the habitual discharge of his religious and moral duty.

He, in whom these things meet, is a Christian, and to be recognized as such by the Christian church.

But now arises another question. Does the church, in bringing an adult to the test of the foregoing requisites, and pronouncing him worthy of her communion, act upon the principle of her *discovering* that he is a regenerated person ; and that he *really is*, in the sight of God, what he *appears to be* in the sight of men ?

By no means. The church, as conducted by a system of instituted ordinances, which men administer, is altogether *visible* ; and it would be absurd to make an invisible quality the criterion of visible communion.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who fell into no mistakes, actually did admit an unconverted man, a hypocrite, a traitor, a devil, into the number not only of his disciples, but even of his apostles : thereby instructing his church that the secret state of the soul before God is not to be her rule of judgment. He knew, from the beginning, who

should betray him ; and yet permitted the infidel to mingle in his train ; to continue in his service, to share the honours of his sincere followers ; and never cast him off till he had proved his rottenness by an overt act of treachery. All which would have been impossible, had the reality of a gracious condition been the ground of church connexion. And it betrays something very different from modesty to set up a term of religious fellowship which would convict the master himself of corrupting his own church.

God has reserved to himself the prerogative of exploring secret motives. “I, Jehovah, search the heart. I try the reins.” And it is a source of ineffable consolation that none but himself *can* try them. The obtrusion of the creature is completely barred out by his own unchangeable constitution. I bless him for it. I had rather perish than have my heart searched by men or angels ; and I put them all at defiance to declare what passes in my breast any further than I myself inform them by my own act. Whoever, therefore, maintains that the *reality* of conversion is the reason of admission to Christian privilege, lays down a rule which never can be applied. There are none who furnish more conclusive evidence of its nullity, than those who most warmly contend for it. A single observation will put this in a strong light. They who, without the aid of a revelation either

from myself or my creator, can read my hidden thoughts on one occasion, can read them on every other. Therefore, if they can ascertain sincerity in religion they can equally ascertain it in their civil transactions ; and consequently would never be imposed upon. But to such lengths they do not pretend to go ; that is, they proclaim the falsity of their own doctrine, and the futility of their own rule. How dare they who cannot detect a perjury in the custom-house, or a lie in the shop, represent themselves as able to detect hypocrisy in religious profession ? It is foolish conceit ; it is contemptible quackery. Take notice how they use their own rule. They get a man to recount his experience. If satisfied with that, they set him down as converted. You see, that for the facts on which they build their judgment, they have only his own word ; and yet they talk of ascertaining his state ! Two plain questions on this head, and we shall leave them :

If their man should say nothing at all, how would they find out his state ?

If he should happen to amuse them with a tale of experience such as they approve, and he never felt, where is their *knowledge* of his state ?

As for those who undertake to *discern spirits*, without producing their authority from the father of spirits, under his broad seal of miracles, nothing is so amazing about them as their effrontery.

All sober men should eschew them as jugglers and impostors. An astrologer who cast nativities from the aspect of the planets; or a strolling gipsey who predicts the history of life from the palm of a child's hand, is as worthy of credence as they.

The result is, that when, according to our best judgment, we perceive those things which are the known and regular effects of Christian principle, we are to account their possessor a brother, and to embrace him accordingly. In other words, *a credible profession of Christianity*, is all that the church may require in order to communion. She may be deceived; her utmost caution may be, and often has been, ineffectual to keep bad men from her sanctuary. And this, too, without her fault, as she is not omniscient. But she has no right to suspect sincerity, to refuse privilege, or to inflict censure, where she can put her finger upon nothing repugnant to the love or the laws of God.

It must of necessity be so. For the principle now laid down is inseparable from human nature, and pervades every form of human society. Examine them all, from the great commonwealth of the nation down to the petty club, and you will meet with no exception. When an alien becomes a citizen, he takes an oath of allegiance to the government. When one becomes a member of a

literary, a mechanical, a benevolent, or any other association, he accedes to its constitution and rules. These are their *professions* respectively. They may profess falsely: But that is nothing to the society, so long as the falsehood is locked up within their own breasts: They are accounted, and rightly accounted, “good men and true,” till they forfeit their reputation and their immunities by some criminal deed. Who doubts that individuals unfaithful in heart to their engagements, are scattered through all these combinations? Yet who would deem it better than madness to decide on their external relations without a warrant from external acts? What horrible confusion would follow a departure from this maxim? Nothing can be true which contradicts any of the great analogies of God’s works; nor can his church be established by the operation of a principle which, in every other case, would destroy all confidence and intercourse among men.

A profession, then, of faith in Christ, and of obedience to him, not discredited by other traits of character, entitles an adult to the privileges of his church. And this is the first way of securing a succession of the covenanted seed, and of handing down their blessings to the end of time.

But the *second* and principal channel of conveyance is *hereditary descent*. The relations and benefits of the covenant are the *birthright* of every

child born of parents who are themselves of “the seed.” “I will establish,” says God, “my covenant between me and thee, and *thy seed after thee, in their generations*, for an everlasting covenant.” The substance of which, to repeat a preceding proposition, manifestly is, that as soon as a new individual is generated from this seed, he is within the covenant, and, according to its tenour, God is his God. This is a characteristic of every public covenant which God has made with man. Take, for example, the covenants with Adam and with Noah. Every human creature comes into being under the full operation of both these covenants. In virtue of the one, he is an “heir of wrath;” and in virtue of the other, an heir of promise to the whole extent of the covenant-mercy. He has the faithfulness of God pledged to him, as one of Noah’s covenanted seed, that the world shall not be drowned by a second deluge; nor visited by another calamity to exterminate his race.

Now, what imaginable reason can be assigned, why, in the covenant with his visible church, the uniform and consistent God should depart from his known rule of dispensation, and violate all the natural and moral analogies of his works and his government? It cannot be. There is no such violation; there is no such departure. Nor is it so much as pretended to have happened from Abraham till John the Baptist, or perhaps the day



of Pentecost. But what was in the ministry of the Baptist? What in the ministry of Jesus Christ? What in the effusion of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, to destroy a radical principle of that very church which John, and Jesus, and the Spirit of Jesus, were sent to bless and perfect? The notion is wild. And if, as has been already demonstrated, the covenant with Abraham and his seed was a covenant with the visible church—if this covenant has never been abrogated—if its relations and privileges, with an exception in favour of adults who desired to come in on the profession of their faith, were to be propagated in the line of natural generation, THEN, it follows, that the infant seed of persons who are under this covenant, are themselves parties to it; are themselves members of the church; and whatever privileges that infant seed had, at any given period in the history of the church, it *must retain* so long as the covenant is in force. But the covenant is in force at this moment; therefore, at this moment, the covenant privileges of the infant seed are in force. Visible membership is one of those privileges; therefore the infant seed of church members are also members of the church.

However men may corrupt and have corrupted the ordinance of God, so as to reject the visible means which he has appointed for perpetuating his church, yet as they cannot overset his govern-

ment, they are compelled to see the principle here contended for, operating, with irresistible force, every hour before their eyes. For whether they will, or whether they will not, the fact is, that the church of God, with an exception before mentioned, ever has been, and is now, propagated by hereditary descent. There is not, perhaps, in any nation under heaven that has been once christianized, and has not sinned away the gospel, a single Christian who has not received his privileges as an inheritance from his fathers. Let us then beware how, in opposing infant church membership, we fight against a principle which is wrought into the essence of all God's constitutions respecting his Church.

## CHURCH OF GOD.

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### No. IV.

#### *Initiating Seal.*

ON the “sign of circumcision” which God annexed to his covenant with Abraham, as “a seal of the righteousness of faith,” some remarks have already been made. In its immediate reference to the Patriarch’s seed, it certified that they belonged to the church of God, and were entitled to all the privileges which she derived immediately from the covenant with their great progenitor. A right to this seal, was the *birthright* of every Hebrew; and it was accordingly applied to him when he was eight days old. That this right was not peculiar to the literal, but was common to the covenanted, seed, is clear from the case of proselytes, who having cleaved to the God of Abraham, were themselves circumcised, and imparted to their children all the prerogatives of a native Hebrew.

On the supposition, then, that circumcision had

not been laid aside, as the covenant, of which it was the seal, has not, it would be at this hour the duty of professing parents to circumcise their infant sons; that is, to have an interest in God's covenant certified to their seed, by applying the seal of it to their male infants. Circumcision, however, having been discontinued, the question is, whether the seal which it conveyed has been discontinued with it? If so, then these two consequences follow.

*First*, That there is no longer any initiatory seal for adults, any more than for infants; because an *abolished* seal can no more be applied to a man than to a babe; and thence,

*Secondly*, That the church of God is under the operation of an *unsealed* covenant; that is, that God has withdrawn the sensible pledge of his covenant relation to her. If it be said that Baptism is appointed to be the initiatory seal under the New Testament dispensation, and is directed to be applied to believing adults, the plea is true; but it concedes much more than suits the purpose of many who urge it.

(1.) As a seal must certify something; as no seal was ever ordained by God but as the seal of his covenant; and as no wise man will pretend that every lawfully baptized adult, is undoubtedly within the covenant of grace, it concedes that God *has a visible church in sealed covenant with himself*,

distinct from that church which is composed of the elect only.

(2.) As he has never made a *new visible church*; nor drawn back from his old engagements, this plea concedes, that the church now in existence is the very church organized by the Abrahamic covenant; and that covenant the very one which is sealed to her by baptism. Then,

(3.) That baptism has come in the place of circumcision; and as adults are ordered to be baptized, without a syllable of the exclusion of infants, the application of circumcision must furnish the rule for that of baptism. And consequently, this same plea which is designed to preclude infant baptism, turns out to be a demonstration of its divine right. Thus the point before us would be completely settled. But to wave this advantage, and to put the subject in another light, let us distinguish, in this matter of circumcision, between the substance and form. The substance of the ordinance, that which properly constituted the *seal*, was the certification to the person sealed, of his interest in God's covenant. The rite of circumcision was no more than the *form* in which the seal was applied. These two things must not be confounded. For, on the one hand, the *rite* may be, and was, and is yet, performed without any sealing whatever. The sons of Ishmael were circumcised, but they belonged not to,

the covenanted seed, and therefore circumcision sealed nothing to them. The Jews are circumcised still, but being cut off from the olive-tree, being cast out of the church of God, and suspended from the privileges of the covenanted seed, their circumcision is nothing. On the other hand, the seal had been the same, although administered by a different rite. The amputation of a toe, the perforation of an ear, the sprinkling of blood, or the anointing with oil, would have answered the purpose as well as circumcision. The essence of the seal lying not in the *rite*, but in the divine sanction which is given by that rite to claims on God's covenant. Now as it is self-evident, that this sanction may be conveyed under any form which he shall please to prescribe, it is a gross error in reasoning to conclude, that because the ancient form is laid aside, therefore the seal and all things certified by it are laid aside too. It would be quite as accurate to infer, that because the form of church polity is altered, therefore the church no longer exists. If it be objected, that "however distinguishable the seal and the sealing rite be from each other in theory, they are inseparable in fact; as the former cannot be applied to us but through the medium of the latter; and therefore if this be abolished, the other is to us as if it did not exist;" I reply, that the objection concludes equally against the existence of a church

upon earth; for it must appear in some visible form, or else, *to us*, it is no church: and the argument is still good, that if the abolition of a particular form of sealing God's covenant, involves the abolition of the seal itself, then the abolition of a particular form of his church, involves the abolition of the church itself. The objection assumes the very point in debate, viz. that the seal of the covenant and a particular form of the sealing rite are co-existent, and perish together. Whereas it is contended, that the cessation of the latter does by no means imply the cessation of the former; but that the seal may remain the same, although the rite be changed; and may pass, in its full virtue and efficacy, through successive forms of application. In truth, it is a fundamental principle, that *forms of dispensation do not affect the substance of the things dispensed*. Otherwise, the covenant of grace has been changed often. But if *five* forms of dispensation have not touched the substance of the covenant of grace; nor *three* forms of dispensation, the substance of the covenant with Abraham; why should the disuse of a particular mode of sealing this latter, draw after it the destruction of the seal itself? and of all the relations and benefits sealed? The issue is, that circumcision may be laid aside without infringing upon the covenant to which it was appended. It has been laid aside, and the question is, What has been

substituted in its place? . As none of the parties to this controversy pretend that it has been succeeded by any other ordinance than baptism, the only alternative is, either that nothing at all has been substituted for it, or else that the substitute is baptism.

If nothing—then while the covenant is in force, and a covenant which must be sealed too, there is no method of applying the seal.

If nothing—then a privilege has been taken away from the church, and she has received no compensation; contrary to the whole tenour of God's dealing with her, and to the positive declarations of his word.

If nothing—then the apostle Peter led his hearers astray, in assuring them that the "promise was to them and their children," which, as Jews, they could not understand of any other promise than that made to Abraham; nor in any other sense, than as asserting the joint interest of their infants, with themselves, in the covenant of God, and, consequently, their right to the seal of that interest. One of the most stubborn and rational prejudices of the Jews against the Christian dispensation, was the fear of losing the privileges to which, as Abraham's seed, they had a covenant claim; and which they, with better excuse than Christians *now*, supposed to be inseparable from the law of Moses. "You mistake the matter,"



cries Peter, full of the Holy Ghost, “there is nothing in the gospel of Jesus Christ, nor the new economy which he has introduced, to destroy or abridge the mercies held out and secured by the covenant with Abraham. The Saviour is, himself, the chief blessing of that covenant. The evangelical dispensation displays its provisions in clearer light, and greater extent. The promise subsists in unabated virtue, and with increased glory ; it is, at this moment, as much as at any moment past, *to you and to your children ;* but it is also *to all them that are afar off, even as many as the Lord your God shall call.*” How could the words of Peter be interpreted by a Jew ? In no other way than this, that neither the covenant of Abraham, nor the seal of that covenant, nor the interest of his infant seed in it was abrogated, or to be abrogated, by the Christian dispensation. How could they be interpreted by a Gentile ? In no other way than this, that persons who “were afar off,” (the very phrase by which Paul describes the Gentiles,) being called by the gospel, should come into the full possession of all the benefits which are contained in the covenant with Abraham ; that is, should enjoy, equally with the Jew, whatever, according to the nature of that covenant, is comprehended in the declaration, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed ;* and equally with the Jew, the pledge and seal of this his privilege. The

Apostle speaks of a promise well-known and highly prized. "*The promise,*" without any explanation. "What promise?" inquires the Gentile. Ask your brother, the Jew, rejoins the Apostle; he understands me thoroughly. It is the promise made to his father, Abraham; that in *his seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed*. "True," you will interrupt, "this is the Apostle's meaning, and it says not a syllable of circumcision, nor of its relation to baptism; nor of infant church membership." Yes, but is a promise in Abraham's covenant: it depends upon the immutability of that covenant. For no engagement whatever, can survive the covenant which gives it birth and validity. And this very promise, the Holy Ghost being judge, was to be so fulfilled, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles; which must mean that they and their seed should be admitted to the privileges granted to Abraham and his seed: so that the children of professing Christians, not less than themselves, should be within the covenant, and entitled to its seal. Thus the Jews evidently understood the Apostle; for among all their objections to the Christian system, they never objected the *exclusion of their infant seed from the church of God*. If, therefore, nothing has come in the place of circumcision, the Apostle acted disingenuously with his Jewish hearers; and quieted their appre-

hension by a fraud upon their consciences. The fraud extended to the Gentile converts; for it referred them to the Jewish standard of interpretation; and every one of the inspired penmen of the New Testament is accessory to its influence, as there is not a sentence in all their writings to correct the error; and the deception will not end even with *them*—\*\*\*\*\*!

But if these things cannot be maintained—If there is no such mockery as a seal without a mode of sealing, and the primitive form of circumcision is abolished—If God has not stripped his church of a privilege, without giving her an equivalent—If the holy Apostle did not abuse the understanding of his hearers, nor sport with their faith in his veracity—then is baptism the substitute for circumcision.

But as this conclusion may be thought too strong for the general argument preceding it, let us submit it to a more direct proof, by inquiring into the scriptural account of both circumcision and baptism. And, *First*, let us see how this account stands with regard to them *separately*. It will be seen in the following contrast.

## CIRCUMCISION,

1. Was an initiatory rite, by which the circumcised were owned as of the covenanted seed, and of the people of God.

## BAPTISM,

1. Is an initiatory rite, by which the baptized are numbered among the disciples of Christ, and the members of the church of God.

2. Was a seal of the righteousness of faith. Rom. iv. 11. i. e. of the Justification of a sinner through the righteousness of the surety embraced by faith.

3. Was an emblem and a means of internal sanctity. *The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.* Deut. xxx. 6. See also ch. x. 16.

2. The person is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, (Act. ii. 38.) which is through faith in his blood ; so that God is just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

3. Is a sign and means of our sanctification in virtue of our communion with Christ.—*Buried with him by baptism into death ; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.* Rom. vi. 4. See also 1 Pet. iii. 21.

The parallel is certainly striking : Circumcision and baptism do both put a mark upon their subjects, as belonging to that society which God hath set apart for himself. They both signify and seal that wondrous change in the state of a sinner, whereby, being justified by faith, he passes from condemnation into acceptance with God ; which doctrines of pardon and acceptance are exhibited in that society alone, which, under the name of his church, God hath consecrated to himself, and of which he hath appointed the circumcised and baptized to be esteemed members. Both represent, and are means of obtaining, that real purity which is effected by the spirit of Christ ; and is

the characteristic of all those members of his church who are justified by faith in his blood. Such a coincidence cannot be casual. It bespeaks design. And seeing that circumcision and baptism do thus substantially answer the same ends, and that the former has ceased, the only sound conclusion is, that it has been succeeded by the latter. Change of dispensation was a sufficient reason why the form of sealing the covenant dispensed should also be changed; and the points of difference between baptism and circumcision, as covenant seals, are only such as were demanded by the nature of the change: the former being much better adapted to a more extensive and spiritual dispensation than the latter. And this is an additional consideration to show that the one has been substituted in the room of the other.

Let us proceed in our inquiry by examining, *Secondly*, into the scriptural manner of representing circumcision and baptism when they are spoken of *together*; or when baptism is mentioned in connexion with the covenant of which circumcision was the seal.—Take two examples.

1. The Apostle Peter, in his famous address to which there has already been frequent reference, assigns the perpetuity of Abraham's covenant, and the validity of its promise, as a reason why his Jewish hearers should be *baptized*. *Repent, says he, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of*

*Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you and to your children.* But how could this promise, being still assured to them and to their children, be a reason for their baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, unless baptism were a seal of that same promise as exhibited in the new economy? “Your circumcision sealed to you,” says the Apostle, “your interest in the covenant with Abraham, as it was exhibited under the law: baptism seals your interest in that covenant, as it is exhibited in perfection under the Gospel. If you refuse the Lord Jesus, and the initiating ordinance of his dispensation, you refuse the better things which God has provided for you. If you yield yourselves up to the Lord Jesus Christ, you will have all that the promise contains in its application to this better state of things, sealed unto you; *therefore, repent and be baptized.*” In this view, the argument is conclusive. In any other, it is of no force at all. What persuasion to baptism could there be in the consideration that the promise was to them and their children, if baptism had no relation to the promise? and what relation could it have unless as a seal, occupying the same place with regard to the promise under the new dispensation, which was occupied by circumcision under the old? Admitting this, every thing is clear. Two initiatory rites of the

same general import, cannot exist together. The dispensation by Christ Jesus takes place of the dispensation by Abraham, with all the additions by Moses; the form of sealing the covenant under this, takes place of the form of sealing it under those. The greater contains all that was contained in the less, and supersedes it. Baptism supplants circumcision.

2. In the epistle of Paul to the Colossians, is the following passage. "*In whom,*" viz. Christ, "*also ye are CIRCUMCISED with the CIRCUMCISION made without hands, in putting off the BODY OF THE SINS OF THE FLESH, by the CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST; buried with him in BAPTISM, wherein also ye are RISEN with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*" Chap. ii. 11, 12.

This is a very extensive proposition, made up of a number of subordinate ones which it is necessary distinctly to weigh.

1st. Both circumcision and baptism are to be viewed as signs of *spiritual mercies*. It is for this reason alone, that they are or can be employed as *terms* to convey the idea of such mercies.

2d. Circumcision was a sign of regeneration, and of communion with Christ, as the fountain of spiritual life. The apostle is treating of a believer's *completeness in Christ*—of *circumcision in Christ*. That his meaning might not be mistaken, he explains himself of the *inward grace*, calling it,

“the *circumcision made without hands*,” and to cut off all misconception, he explains his explanation, declaring this “circumcision without hands,” to be, *the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.*

3d. Baptism, too, is a sign of regeneration, and of communion with Christ, as the fountain of spiritual life.

In baptism, saith Paul, ye are “buried *with Christ*,” “ye are risen *with him*,” through a divine faith, “the faith of the operation of God.”—Whereas ye were “dead in sins, and the *uncircumcision of your flesh*,” (uncircumcision put for the state of irregeneracy,) God hath *quickened you together with Christ.*

Collect now the result. A believer’s sanctification, in virtue of union with Christ, Paul declares to be represented by both circumcision and baptism; for he expresses his doctrine by these terms indifferently; and annexes to them both, the same spiritual signification: He has, therefore, *identified* the two ordinances: and thus, by demonstrating that they have one and the same use and meaning, he has exhibited to our view the very same seal of God’s covenant, under the forms of circumcision and baptism respectively. But as the same thing cannot subsist in different forms at the same time: and as the first form, viz. circumcision, is laid aside; it follows, that the



seal of God's covenant is perpetuated under the second form, viz. baptism; and that it signifies and seals in a manner suited to the evangelical dispensation, whatever was previously signified and sealed by the rite of circumcision.

If we again inspect the Apostle's proposition, we shall find, that he directs us to this conclusion, as well by the structure of his phraseology, as by the force of his argument. For, on the one hand, by the indiscriminate use of the terms circumcision and baptism, he appears to assume, as an indisputable fact, the substitution of the latter in place of the former; nor is it easy to conceive why he should discourse in this allusive manner, if the exchange were not perfectly understood among Christians: and, on the other hand, his language is so framed, as to assert that exchange. "Circumcised—in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the *circumcision* of *Christ*; buried with him in *baptism*." What can the apostle intend, by the "*circumcision* of Christ?" Doubtless, not the literal rite, for this would destroy at once the whole of his reasoning on the article of sanctification, in the same way as it is destroyed by those who interpret the phrase, "buried with him in baptism," of submersion of the body in the act of baptising. The apostle cannot so trifle. By the "*circumcision* of Christ," he means that righteousness of faith, that mortifi-

cation\* of sin, that quickening influence, which flow from Christ, and were signified by circumcision. But that same righteousness of faith, and mortification of sin, and quickening influence, are also signified by baptism. But circumcision and baptism are external signs, which the apostle recognizes by specifying the things signified. In his transition from the one to the other, that is, from circumcision to baptism, as signifying, in their respective places, the very same blessings, he points to the transition which the church of God has made in fact, from the use of the former to the use of the latter. "With regard to the things signified," saith he, "there is no difference. The circumcision of Christ, and burial with him in baptism, are expressions of similar import; both declaring a believer's communion with him in his covenant mercies. With regard to the outward sign, fellowship with Christ in his death and resurrection, is represented in baptism, as putting off the body of "the sins of the flesh," was formerly represented in circumcision." If this be just, the inference is plain. Baptism is the *Christian* circumcision; the sign of baptism is the *Christian* form of sealing God's covenant, and, as such, has taken place of circumcision.

In confirmation of what is here advanced, let us look, for a moment, at the Apostle's account of Abraham's circumcision; Rom. iv. 11. &c. *He*

*received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also. And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised.*

Two great prerogatives are here ascribed to Abraham :

1. That he should transmit, in the line of the covenanted seed, the righteousness of faith to all generations and nations, so as to be, in a sense which belonged, and could belong, to no other man, the *Father of all them that believe*.

2. That with the righteousness of faith, he should transmit the seal of God's covenant, by the intervention of which it was to be perpetuated in the world, and actually imputed to all believers. For he was not only the father of all them that believe, but "the father of *circumcision*" to them.

This cannot mean the things *signified* by circumcision; for the apostle includes them in the first prerogative: and such an interpretation would convert into mere tautology, two propositions which are strongly distinguished from each other in the text. Circumcision, says the apostle, was a seal of the righteousness of the faith which Abra

ham had before he was circumcised : and he is the father of this circumcision to all them who walk in the steps of his faith ; that is, he transmits the sign and seal along with the thing signified ; conveying the evidence of God's covenant, as far and as wide as he conveys the blessing ministered by it, so that in whatever sense he is the father of them that believe, in the same sense is he the father to them of the seal of that righteousness which they embrace by faith : and further, the benefits conferred through the medium of Abraham's covenant, are asserted to be contemporary with the seal ; both descending together from him to the last of the covenanted seed. The Apostle himself applies the principle, in the most positive terms, to the old and the new dispensation.

To the old dispensation—"The father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only," evidently those who, being his descendants, or incorporated with them, were literally circumcised. They inherited the seal from their father Abraham. This is not questioned. But the Apostle extends the principle.

To the new dispensation—The "father of circumcision to them also who walk in the steps of his faith." In what sense is Abraham the "father of circumcision," as the Apostle maintains, to them who never were literally circumcised, and

whom he expressly distinguishes from the circumcision? Manifestly in this sense, that they, being accounted of Abraham's seed, by their admission into the church of God, receive along with it, by inheritance from the patriarch, the seal of that covenant in which they are become interested. But circumcision is abolished long ago: yet Abraham is the father of circumcision to them at this hour. There is no avoiding a direct contradiction, but upon the principle, that though the outward rite of circumcision be discontinued, yet the substance of the ordinance, the seal of the covenant abides; is applied under another form, and is as really inherited by the people of God from their father Abraham in that form, as it was inherited by them of old in the form of circumcision. But now, if this seal does not subsist in the ordinance of baptism, it has no existence at all; and there is no possible sense in which Abraham is *to us* the father of circumcision. Therefore, baptism has succeeded to circumcision.

This reasoning draws after it, infallibly, the church membership of infants, and their right to baptism. For as there is no distinction between the mode in which Abraham has handed down the sealed privileges of God's covenant to those who were, and those who were not, of the circumcision; and as they were made over to the former, and their infant seed, they must also be made

over to the latter and their infant seed. It is no objection to the foregoing argument, that baptism is administered to *female* infants, whereas only *males* were circumcised : because the *extension* of a privilege can never be pleaded as a proof of its *abrogation* ; and the New Testament itself has positively annulled, in spiritual things, all pre-eminence and inferiority arising from condition or sex.

The only difficulty of any importance, under which the doctrine of these pages can labour, is the application of the seal of the righteousness of faith to multitudes who never had and never will have that righteousness ; consequently, that the seal of God's covenant, who is the God of truth, is, by his own appointment, very often affixed to a lie.

The difficulty is precisely the same in reference to circumcision as to baptism. The former was undoubtedly " a seal of the righteousness of faith ;" and as undoubtedly was often applied to multitudes who never had that righteousness. Did the God of truth, therefore, *certify a lie* ? Methinks so blasphemous a deduction, which is equally valid against his *acknowledged* institution of infant circumcision, as against his *disputed* institution of infant baptism, should make sober men, who cannot escape from it, suspect the soundness of their views. It is, more-

over, the same difficulty which occurs in the celebration of the Lord's supper, and in the baptism of adults ; unless we can be assured that *all* the recipients are *true converts*. But, indeed, the difficulty itself is created by erroneous notions of the nature of God's church ; by confounding visible members with his elect—and his covenant to the church, with his covenant of grace in Christ Jesus. A proper application of this distinction will remove it, and *demonstrate that the seal of God's covenant, does, in every instance, certify absolute truth, whether it be applied to a believer, or to an unbeliever ; to the elect, or to the reprobate.*

# CHURCH OF GOD.

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No. V.

*Infant members.*

IN our preceding numbers, we have given a general view of the Church of God, as one great visible society which he has taken into peculiar relations to himself. We traced its origin, as an *organized whole*, up to the Abrahamic covenant, of which we explained the nature, and proved the perpetuity. We also investigated the uses of its initiating rite, viz. circumcision; which, we assigned reasons to show, has been exchanged, under the evangelical dispensation, for the ordinance of baptism: and we touched, in general terms, upon the conclusion which our premises justify, respecting the ecclesiastical condition and privileges of infants born of believing parents. Having avowed our persuasion, that they are, in virtue of their birth, members of the church of God, and entitled, during their infancy, to baptism in his name, we shall, in this number, state our con-



clusion more fully, and shall strengthen it with some auxiliary considerations.

The reader, on looking back to No. III. of this series, will find the following paragraph.

“ If, as has been already demonstrated, the covenant with Abraham and his seed was a covenant with the visible church—if this covenant has never been abrogated—if its relations and privileges, with an exception in favour of adults who desired to come in on the profession of their faith, were to be propagated in the line of natural generation, THEN, it follows, that the infant seed of persons who are under this covenant, are themselves parties to it; are themselves members of the church; and whatever privileges that infant seed had at any given period in the history of the church, it *must retain* so long as the covenant is in force. But the covenant is in force at this moment; therefore, at this moment, the covenant privileges of the infant seed are in force. Visible membership is one of those privileges; therefore the infant seed of church members are also members of the church.”

This, then, is the ground on which we take our stand in pleading the cause of the children whom God has given us. We account them members of his church, not because *tradition* has called them so; not because the *practice* of the church has treated them as such; but because he consti-

tuted them such by his own commandment and covenant which he has never revoked until this day.

To insist, therefore, that we shall produce, from the New Testament, a precept directly instituting the church membership of infants, is to make a demand with which we are under no obligation to comply. Such a precept was not necessary. The relation we are inquiring into had been instituted long before ; it had subsisted without one moment's interruption for more than nineteen centuries. During this great lapse of ages it had enlisted on its side, in addition to its divine original, the most irrefragable prejudices of antiquity, the most confirmed national habit, and the fastidious jealousy of prerogative. In this state of its prevalence was the evangelical dispensation announced. If the same relation of infants to the church was to continue under the New Testament form, nothing is more easy than to assign the reason why it was not instituted anew. The principle was undisputed ; it was acted upon as a principle which the change of dispensation did not touch ; and consequently, a new institution was superfluous. The silence of the New Testament on this head, is altogether in favour of those who maintain that the union of parents with the church of God, includes their children also. But on the supposition that this principle was to

operate no longer ; that the common interest of children with their parents in God's covenant was to cease ; the silence of the New Testament is one of the most inexplicable things which ever tortured the ingenuity of man. If there is any point of external privilege which ought to have been settled with the most definite precision, one would imagine that this is the point. But we are taught to believe, that a constitution which is engrafted upon a principle that penetrates the essence of human society ; which coincides with the genius of every other divine constitution respecting man ; which is incorporated with his animal, his intellectual, and his moral character ; which is interwoven with every ligament and fibre of his heart, shall be torn away ; and yet the statute book of the kingdom in which this severity originates, shall contain no warrant for executing it, nor a syllable to soothe the anguish which it has inflicted ! Is it thus that God deals with his people ? Does this look like his wonted condescension to their infirmities ? Does it bear the character of that loving kindness and tender mercy which belong to him who " knows their frame, and remembers that they are dust ?"

When the economy of Moses was to be superseded by that of Jesus Christ, he prepared the way in the most gradual and gentle manner ; he showed them from their own scriptures, that he had done

only what he had intended and predicted from the beginning ; he set before their eyes a comparative view of the two dispensations, to satisfy them that they had lost nothing, but had gained much by the exchange. When they were “dull of hearing,” he bore with their slowness ; when they were extremely unwilling to part with Moses, he stooped to their infirmities ; and persevered in his lenity, till the destruction of their city, their sacrifices, their temple, their nation, left their further demurring without the shadow of an excuse. But when he touched them in the point of most exquisite sensibility—when he passed a sword through their souls by cutting off their children, unable to distinguish between good and evil, from all the interest which they once had in his church, the heavy mandate is preceded by no warning, is accompanied with no comfort ; is followed by nothing to replace the privation ; is not even supported by a single reason ! The thing is done in the most summary manner, and the order is not so much as entered into the rule of faith ! The believing mother hears that the “son of her womb” is shut out from the covenant of her God, but hears not why ! Is this the ordinance of him who, “as a father pitieth his children, so pities them that fear him ?” It cannot be !

Conceding, then, to the opposers of our children’s claim as members of the Christian church,

all that they ask with regard to the *silence* of the New Testament, that very concession works their ruin. If their views are correct, it could not have been thus silent. Out of their own mouths we draw their conviction; and cast them in the judgment by the very evidence which they offer in their vindication.

The case is now reversed. Instead of *our* producing from the New Testament such a warrant for the privileges of our infant seed, as they require, we turn the tables upon them; and insist, that *they* shall produce scriptural proof of God's having *annulled the constitution under which we assert our right*. Till they do this, our cause is invincible. He once granted to his church the right for which we contend; and nothing but his own act can take it away. We want to *see the act of abrogation*; we must see it in the *New Testament*; for there it is, if it is at all. Point it out, and we have done. Till then we shall rejoice in the consolation of calling upon God as our God, and the God of our seed.

2. We have before remarked, that the exclusion of infants from the church of God, contradicts all the analogies of his external dispensations towards men.\*

A correct reasoner will require the highest evidence of which the case is susceptible, before he

\* Christian Magazine, Vol. I. p. 58—61.

admits a doctrine involving such a consequence. *General principles* are the great landmarks of truth. They furnish tests by which to try the soundness of those endless propositions which are generated by the ceaseless activity of the human mind. *One* of them, well understood and judiciously applied, is a better preservative from error, than a million of those small arguments by which multitudes regulate their opinion and their conduct.

If, indeed, it is the will of God that children shall not be esteemed, during their infancy, as members of the New Testament church; and if he has promulged his will in this matter by any explicit statute, or by any act which necessarily infers such an appointment, there is an end to all our difficulties and disquisitions. “Thus saith Jehovah,” discharges, at once, every human inquiry. But seeing that, in every public constitution, he always identified parents with their children; and that in every other department of his government this principle is conspicuous at the present hour, an argument of the most imperious sort thence arises in favour of our children’s birth-right as members of his church. For as his constitutions of nature and of grace agree with the most wonderful harmony; and as this agreement is the foundation of all those references to the former, by which the scriptures explain and illustrate the latter, it is “passing strange,” that he should

introduce, into the heart of his church, a law which is at complete variance with the whole system of his creation and providence ! that he should go out of his way to make an exception, not *for*, but *against*, his own people : refusing to them, as members of his church, the benefit of an ordinance which in other societies erected by his authority, he freely allows to mankind at large ; and refusing it at the expense of resuming, without an equivalent, the grant which he formerly conveyed to them !

The case is still stronger when we reflect that the children of believing parents participate in all the *disasters* of the external church. If she be corrupted, the corruption infects them ; if she be persecuted, the persecution smites them ; if her mercies be sinned away, the punishment of the sin lights on them. Could they suffer more upon the supposition of their being really members ? It seems, then, that they are to share in all her afflictions, without sharing in her privileges : that when evil overtakes her, they are to be treated as citizens ; but when her immunities are dispensed, as aliens. So that the Lord our God *suspends* a leading principle of his physical and moral order, for the sake of barring the seed of his people from *privilege* ; and permits it to take its full course for the infliction of *calamity* ! This is more than incredible !

3. If the children of believing parents are not members of the church, before making a profession of their own faith, it follows, that from the day of their birth to the day of their conversion, they stand in no nearer relation to her than Pagans or Jews. A right to instruct, to warn, to entreat them, she certainly has ; and she has the same right with regard to the Jew or the Pagan ; but no *authority* over any of them. Her jurisdiction being necessarily confined to her own subjects ; having no power to “judge them that are without ;” and the children of her members being “without,” she can take no cognizance of them which she might not take of infant or adult heathen who are within her reach. As it is their own act upon which they are admitted into her number, so it is that same act by which she acquires any right of directing them. Their parents she can enjoin to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” because God has rendered it a branch of parental duty ; and she ought to enforce the observance of his law by all those spiritual means which he has confided to her zeal. But if parents be incapable of fulfilling their obligations ; if they should happen to be separated from their families ; to fail through negligence, or be cut off by death : or if the children prove refractory to parental admonition ; in none of these cases can the church of God interpose any fur-



ther than to perform an act of voluntary benevolence. *Authority* is out of the question. For what authority can she have over those who never sought her fellowship; to whom she has denied her privileges; and whom she disowns as members? The same principle upon which she attempts to control the children of her members, would justify her in attempting to legislate for others who are without her pale, extending her discipline to Jews, Turks, Pagans; nay, to the whole world lying in wickedness. If she may not do this, the reason, and the only reason, is that they are not her members; which reason is equally valid in the case of children who are not her members. The alternative is plain; either the church of God must give up her care over youth who have not made a profession of their faith; or in order to exercise it must commit an act of usurpation.

But how can a Christian be reconciled to either part of the alternative? How can he persuade himself that children born of the people of God, consecrated to his fear, and declared by his inspired apostle to be "holy," are no more members of his church, than the savage who wanders upon the banks of the Missouri? How can he persuade himself, that among the solemn trusts of the Christian church, that most important one of superintending the youth, has been omitted? That she has received no charge, possesses no

power, and is under no responsibility, on this subject, further than to stimulate the individual efforts of parents, masters, or teachers? If she has received any other commandment; if, in her *social* character, she is bound to provide for “training up a child in the way in which he should go,” then the children to be so trained, must be treated as her members; and are members in fact, for God never vested her with authority over any who are not.

To set this point in another light. God, in the ordinary course of his providence, does actually gather his “true worshippers” from the families of his people; and, for the most part, in the days of their youth. He does it most conspicuously in those churches which subject them, when young, to the most exemplary inspection. He has, on the other hand, frowned upon churches as they became remiss in this particular; his good Spirit has departed from them; and there are not a few which, at this hour, may trace their declension and the rapid approach of their desolation, to the neglect of their youth. But to deny that children are members of the church, is to deny both her duty and her right to exercise any public authority over them; and to deny it in opposition both to the blessing and the curse of God: is to smite the Redeemer’s kingdom in the heart of one of its most precious interests, the youth; and to do

it much deeper and more effectual injury, than it is likely to suffer from the assaults of open enemies.

These consequences appear to us inevitable. Far from us be the thought of imputing them to those who reject the church membership of infants; or of asserting that they do in fact occur as regularly as we might expect. For, on the one hand, God does not permit Error to mature all the deadly fruits which she is capable of bearing : and, on the other, the nature of human society is not to be subverted by theory. Let men profess what they please; let them renounce, and if they think fit, ridicule, our doctrine; it is nevertheless true, that they cannot get along in the religious any more than in the civil community, without more or less considering children as members. And it is their acting upon the very principle which they represent as unscriptural and absurd, that saves their churches from speedy destruction.

4. From the date of the covenant with Abraham, to the cessation of the Mosaic law, infants were undoubtedly members of God's church. The seal of his covenant was in their flesh ; and it was deemed by every Hebrew a prerogative of inestimable worth. "Uncircumcised," was the most bitter and disdainful reproach which his mouth could utter. He would sooner lay his sons in the grave, than permit them go without

the token of their being Abraham's seed. On these facts we found three inquiries. The first relating to the privilege which God conferred upon his people; the second to the effect which the recalling of it produced on them; and the third to their state of feeling under the loss.

*First.* "The sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith," applied, by divine direction, to infant members of the church, was a high privilege.

This cannot, with even a show of reason, be disputed. That God should subject them to a painful rite which was of no use—that the indelible certification of his being their God as he had been the God of their fathers, should be coupled with no benefit—that he should draw them into covenant relations which were good for nothing, no man is sottish enough to pretend. Their condition, therefore, as members of his church, and the sacramental sign of it, was a real and an important privilege.

What has become of it?

If infants are no longer members of his church, it is taken away, and what has replaced it? Nothing, Nothing! then God has put the children of his people under the new dispensation, further from him than they were under the old. He has inverted his method of providence toward his church, which has uniformly been to bless her

with *progressive* light and favour. The communication of his grace and truth always increasing, never diminished. Each succeeding dispensation comprehending the whole mass of benefits which belonged to the preceding, and adding others of its own. But in this solitary, instance the course of his covenant is changed ! And whereas he had formerly separated his people from the heathen that knew him not ; had drawn around them a line of covenant goodness ; had put their *little ones* within the holy circle ; and had instructed them to cherish the distinction as, in his sight, of great price—yet now, when he is to enlarge their inheritance, and enrich their joys ; to fulfil the promise of those good things which “ eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had entered into the heart of man,” he *begins* with telling them that though he will still be *their* God, he will no longer be the God of their *seed* ; that he has cast their babes out of his church, over the line of his covenant, in among the “ dogs.” And all this, after he had sworn that he would “ not break his covenant, nor alter the thing that had gone out of his mouth :” and having done it, commissions his apostle to declare, that “ his gifts and his calling are without repentance ;” i. e. that a grant which he has once made to his church, he never annuls ! Believe it who can.\*

\* Rom. xi. 29. That the unchangeableness of God's gifts and

Let us, however, allow that we have misconstrued the divine covenant; and that infants born *after* the settlement of the new economy, had no such claim as had the infant posterity of Abraham. How did the arrangement affect the children of those who were the first members of the Christian church? For example, those who were added to her on the day of Pentecost? This is our *Second Inquiry.*

The rule of God's proceeding against those who should reject the Messiah, was laid down by Moses; and is thus quoted and explained by the apostle Peter: "*Moses truly said unto the Fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that EVERY SOUL WHICH WILL NOT HEAR THAT PROPHET, SHALL BE DESTROYED FROM AMONG THE PEOPLE.*" Act. iii. 22, 23.

calling refers to his church, we conclude from the whole scope of the apostle's reasoning in the context; part of which proves the recovery of Israel to the mercies of their fathers; and proves it from the consideration, that it is God's gracious design to reinstate them in their privileges; that this design is to be accomplished in virtue of the "gifts and calling" to their fathers Abraham Isaac, and Jacob. And as they cannot be reinstated but by embracing Christianity, these unchangeable "gifts and calling," must be continued in the New Testament church. Infant membership was, incontrovertibly, one of the gifts: therefore, if the children of his people are not members of his church, God *has* broken his covenant.

The sin of which the Jews were warned by their great law-giver, was their not obeying the voice of his great successor ; that is, the sin of rejecting the Messiah. The punishment denounced against this sin, was “ *destruction from among the PEOPLE.*” Who were the people ? And what was the destruction ?

(1.) Who were the *people* ?

Not the *nation* of the Jews. For, having committed the crime, they themselves fell under the penalty. Their nation was to be destroyed ; whereas, according to the prediction of Moses, it was not the *people* that were to perish ; but the *disobedient* who were to be destroyed from *among* the people ; which implies the continuance of that people in the divine protection. It is a people, therefore, which was to survive the rejection of the Jews, and be placed in such circumstances of favour, as to render destruction from among them a great and terrible judgment.

Not the people whom God “ hath chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy.” For God never *cast away his people whom he foreknew.\** They who committed the crime before us, never belonged to his people, and so could not be destroyed from among them ; and they whom God had thus chosen did

\* Rom. xi. 2. Acts xiii. 48.

not commit the crime. “*As many as were ordained unto eternal life,* BELIEVED.”

Who then are “the people” from among whom the sinners were to be destroyed? If not the *Jewish* people, if not the *elected* people of God, it can be no other than that PEOPLE whom he owns as his, and who are called by the collective name of his CHURCH.\*

(2.) What was the “destruction?”

Not temporal death: for God never ordained this punishment for the sin of unbelief on his son.

Not an exclusion from the communion of the Jewish nation; for unbelief in Christ was to them a recommendation instead of a disparagement; and to be severed from them entirely, was at least as likely to prove a blessing as a curse.

In what, then, did the destruction consist? Un-

\* This passage furnishes an irrefragable proof of the unity and perpetuity of the *Visible Church*.

For, 1. These rebels were a *part* of the people from among whom they were to be destroyed: which people we have proved, could be no other than the people or church of God.

2. The people or church from which they were to be destroyed, was to remain a people, and the peculiar object of the divine regard. This is true of no people but that which composes his church. The Christian church is therefore the *very same* church from which the Jews were cast out.

3. The term “people” cannot designate the church otherwise than as a *great WHOLE*. The more we “search the scriptures,” the more does a “cloud of witnesses” thicken round us to testify that “the Church of God is ONE.”



doubtedly, in having their name and place exterminated from among the people of God ; in being cast out of his church, and exposed to that perdition which shall be the fate of all whom he disowns. This must be the interpretation of the threatening, because no other will comport with either sense or fact.

Let us now see how this bears upon the point before us.

The unbelieving Jews were cut off, for their unbelief, from the church of God ; and, surely, it will not be accounted the least part of the vengeance, that their children shared their fate.

But the case of believing Jews was exactly the reverse. If they who would not hear the divine prophet were to be destroyed from among the people ; it certainly follows, that they who would and did hear him, should not be destroyed ; but should retain their place and privileges. And if, in the execution of the curse upon the disobedient, their children also were cut off ; then, God's own act establishing the principle of judgment, the children of those who were not disobedient, participated in their blessing ; i. e. instead of being destroyed from among the people, were numbered with them ; or, which is the same, were, by his own authority, reckoned members of his church.

These infants, then, being in the church of God

already, the question is, by what authority were they cast out? It would be an unheard of thing if the faith of their parents in the “consolation of Israel,” should expel them. A singular way, indeed, of converting a Jew, to tell him that the very fact of his being a believer in Christ would excommunicate his children! The issue is short. Either the children of believing Jews were members of the church under her Christian form, or not. If not, then, in so far as their children were concerned, God inflicted upon the *faith* of parents, that very curse which he had threatened upon their *unbelief*. If otherwise, then at the very beginning of the new dispensation, infants were members of his church. We give our opponents, their option.

We have yet to answer a

*Third Inquiry*, concerning the excision of infants from the New Testament church: or, if you prefer it, their non-admission to her privileges.

How must such a measure have operated upon the feelings of a believing Jew?

Tenacious, in a high degree, of their peculiarities—regarding their relation to Abraham as momentous to their individual happiness; and as the most prominent feature of their national glory—knowing, too, that their children were comprised with themselves in the covenant of God, it is not possible that the Hebrews could have sub-

mitted, without reluctance, to a constitution which was to strip them of their favourite privilege; to dissever their tenderest ties; to blot the names of their little ones out of the register of God's people; and treat them afterwards, from generation to generation, as the little ones of the heathen man and the publican ! On every other prerogative, real or imaginary, their suspicion was awake, their zeal inflammable, their passions intractable. But toward this, their grand prerogative, they evinced a tameness which required them to forget, at once, that they were men and that they were Jews. Search the records of the New Testament from one end to the other, and you will not find the trace of a remonstrance, an objection, or a difficulty on this subject, from the mouth of either a believing or an unbelieving Israelite ! The former never parted with a tittle of even the Mosaic law, till the will of God was so clearly demonstrated as to remove every doubt : the latter lay constantly in wait for matter of accusation against the Christians. Nothing could have prompted him to louder clamour, to fiercer resistance, or to heavier charges, than an attempt to overturn a fundamental principle of the covenant with Abraham : nothing could have more startled and distressed the meek and modest disciple. Yet that attempt is made; that fundamental principle of the covenant with Abraham, is overturn-

ed; and not a friend complains, nor a foe resents! What miracle of enchantment has so instantaneously relieved the conscience of the one, and calmed the warmth of the other? Where is that wayward vanity, that captious criticism, that combustible temperament, that insidious, implacable, restless enmity, which by night and by day, in country and in town, haunted the steps of the apostles, and treasured up actions, words, looks, for the hour of convenient vengeance? All gone; dissipated in a moment! The proud and persecuting Pharisee rages at the name of Jesus Christ; fights for his traditions and his phylacteries; and utters not a syllable of dissent from a step which completely annihilates the covenant with Abraham! that very covenant from which he professes to derive his whole importance!! We can believe a great deal, but not quite so much as this.

Should it be alleged, that the Jews did probably oppose the exclusion of their infants from the New Testament church, although the sacred writers have omitted to mention it: we reply,

That although many things have happened which were never recorded; and, therefore, that the mere silence of an historian, is not, in itself, conclusive against their existence; yet no man may assume, as proof, the existence of a fact which is unsupported by either history or tradi-

tion. On this ground, the plea which we have stopped to notice is perfectly nugatory.

In the present case, however, the probabilities look all the other way. We mean, that if the Jews had made the opposition, which on the supposition we are combatting, it is inconceivable they should not have made, it would have been so interwoven with the origin, constitution, progress, and transactions of the primitive church, as to have rendered an omission of it almost impossible.

The question about circumcision and the obligation on the Gentile converts to keep the law of Moses, shook the churches to their centre; and was not put at rest but by a formal decision of the apostles and elders. Now as circumcision was the seal of the Abrahamic covenant, which explicitly constituted infants members of the church, is it to be imagined that so hot a controversy should have been kindled about the en sealing rite, and none at all about the privilege sealed? or that a record should have been carefully preserved of the disputes and decision concerning the *sign*; and no record at all kept of the discussions concerning the *thing signified*, which imparted to the former all their interest and value?

It is, therefore, utterly incredible that the resistance of Jews to the Christian arrangement for shutting out their children from the church of God,

should have passed unnoticed. But no notice of any such resistance is in the New Testament. The conclusion is, that no such resistance was ever offered : and the conclusion from this again is, that no cause for it existed ; that is, that the infants of professing parents were considered as holding, under the new economy, the same place and relation which they held under the old.

Our conclusion acquires much force from the nature of the controversy respecting circumcision. The Judaizing teachers made the observance of this rite, a term, not only of communion, but of salvation. *Except ye be circumcised, said they, and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved.* Had their doctrine prevailed, circumcision in the Christian church must have been regulated by the Mosaic law. But this law prescribed the circumcision of infants. Now, under what pretext could they urge a compliance with this ordinance, according to the law of Moses, upon the Gentile converts, unless it were *an undisputed point* that the children of these converts were members of the Christian church ? An exception was at hand. “ Whatever may be the duty of *adults*, there is no reason to circumcise *infants* ; because, by the new order of things, they do not belong to the Christian community, and have no concern with its sealing ordinances.” Yet no such exception was ever taken.

This one fact, under all its circumstances and connexions,\* is equivalent to a doctrinal declaration of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, that the change of dispensation has not affected the rights of infants born of believing parents; and that they are under the Christian, as really as they were under the Mosaic, economy, members of the church of God; and as fully entitled to its initiating ordinance.

5. The *language* of God's word, respecting children, is in perfect accordance with the principle of their being members of his church; but is irreconcilable with the contrary supposition.

Enumerating some of the benefits of the new economy, he says, by the prophet Isaiah, that his people "shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for "trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their *offspring with them.*"† The Redeemer, in the days of his flesh, was much displeased with an attempt of his disciples to keep back infants from approaching him, and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for *of such is the kingdom of God.*"‡ An expression which, we well know, signifies the New Testament church. "The promise," said Peter, after the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, "The promise is to you, and to *your children.*"§

\* Compare Acts xxi. 21.

† Is. lxx. 23.

‡ Mark x. 14.

§ Acts ii. 39.

These and similar expressions, with which the word of God abounds, correspond much better to that system which associates children with their parents in his church, than with that which rejects them as no part of it. And we must have very strong reasons to justify our embracing a system which requires a language contrary to the genius of the language which the Holy Spirit himself has selected.

6. Unless we greatly mistake, the apostle Paul has twice decided the question before us in the most unequivocal manner; and decided it in our favour.

One of his decisions is in the following words: “The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife; and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; *else were your children* UNCLEAN, *but now are they* HOLY.”\*

In what sense does a believing, sanctify an unbelieving, parent, so that their *children* are holy? Wherein does this holiness consist? Some have been so galled by this assertion of the apostle, that they have tried to fitter it down into a grave declaration of the legitimacy of children born of parents thus situated. As if faith in Christ were necessary to the validity of espousals! As if all the marriages of the heathen were mere concubi-



nage; and all their children the fruit of illicit amours !

The apostle certainly does not mean that one parent communicates to another, or that either of them communicates to their children, that internal conformity to the divine purity, which is commonly called "holiness" or sanctification. This is contrary to reason, to scripture, and to daily experience. Yet he says that a believing parent renders holy the unbelieving one; and that, in consequence, their children are holy. What does he mean ?

"Holy," as a term of established use and signification, was well understood by the Corinthian Christians. It expresses the state of a person or thing specially separated to the service of God; and in which, by reason of that separation, he acquires a peculiar property. For this interpretation we have his own authority—when prohibiting various pollutions, he thus addresses the people of Israel; *Ye shall be HOLY unto me : for I the Lord am holy ; and HAVE SEVERED you from other people, that ye should be MINE.* Lev. xx. 26. This "severing" was effected by his covenant with them. They were "holy," because they belonged to his church, which he had erected to put his name and his glory there.

"Unclean," as contrasted with "holy," expresses the state of a person not separated to the ser-

vice of God: in whom he has no peculiar interest, and who is, therefore, “common;” i. e. *unappropriated to God*. All who are conversant with the scriptural phraseology know this representation to be true.

What, then, does the apostle say? He says that if the unbelieving, were *not* sanctified by the believing, parent, their children would be “unclean;” would be “common;” would have no peculiar relation to God, nor any place in his church. But since the believing, *does* sanctify the unbelieving, parent, their children are the reverse of “unclean:” they are “holy;” they are born under peculiar relations to God; they are appropriated to him; they are members of his church; and as they undoubtedly have a right to the token of their membership—to baptism.

Considering the nature of the scriptural style; and that “holy,” and “unclean,” or “common,” are the precise terms for such as were, and as were not, respectively, within the external covenant of God, we are unable to conceive how the apostle could more formally and unequivocally have declared the church membership of infants born of a believing parent. The first of these terms was, in his mouth, exactly what “a member of the church” is in ours; and could not be otherwise understood by the primitive Christians.

The only plausible difficulty which lies against our view, is, that "According to the same reasoning, an unbeliever, *continuing in unbelief*, becomes a member of the church in consequence of marriage with a believer. For the apostle does not more positively affirm that the children are "holy," than he affirms that the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife sanctified, or "made holy," by the husband. Therefore, if holiness imparted by the parent to the children, makes them members of the church, the holiness imparted by one parent to the other, makes him or her, a member of the church. 'This will not be maintained. For it would be absurd to imagine, that an infidel adult, living in open hostility to the church of God, should be reckoned among its members merely in virtue of union to a believing husband or wife. Well then, if the "sanctification," which an unbelieving wife derives from her believing husband, does not make *her* a member of the church, the "holiness" which children derive from a believing parent, cannot make *them* members of the church."

The objection is shrewd: but, like many other shrewd things, more calculated to embarrass an inquirer, than to assist him. Our answer is short.

*First*, It makes the apostle talk nonsense. The amount of it when stripped of its speciousness

and tried by the standard of common sense, being neither more nor less than this, that all his discourse about the sanctification of husband and wife, and the holiness of their children, means—just *nothing at all*. For if it be not an internal holiness, which we do not affirm; nor an external relative holiness, which the objection denies; then a person is said by the apostle to be holy, whose holiness is neither within him nor without him; neither in soul, nor spirit, nor body, nor state, nor condition, nor any thing else: which, in our apprehension, is as genuine nonsense as can well be uttered. If those who differ from us feel themselves wronged, we beg them to show *in what the holiness mentioned by the apostle consists*.

*Secondly.* The objection takes for granted, that the sanctification of the husband by his wife, or of the wife by her husband, is precisely of the same *extent*, and produces on its subject the same *effect*, as the holiness which children inherit from a believing parent. This is certainly erroneous.

(1.) The covenant of God never founded the privilege of membership in his church upon the mere fact of *intermarriage* with his people: but it did expressly found that privilege upon the fact of being *born* of them.

(2.) By a positive precept, adults were not to be admitted into the church without a profession of their faith. This is a special statute, limiting,

in the case of adults, the general doctrine of membership. Consequently, the doctrine of Paul must be explained by the restriction of that statute. "Sanctify" her unbelieving husband the believing wife does ; and so does the believing husband his unbelieving wife ; i. e. to a *certain length* ; but not so far as to render the partner thus sanctified, a member of the church—The former cannot be doubted, for the apostle peremptorily asserts it—The latter cannot be admitted ; for it would contravene the statute already quoted. The membership of infants does not contravene it. And, therefore, although the holiness which the apostle ascribes to infants involves *their* membership ; it does not follow that the sanctifying influence over an unbelieving husband or wife, which he ascribes to the believing wife or husband, involves the church membership of the party thus sanctified.

(3.) The very words of the text lead to the same conclusion. They teach us, in the plainest manner, that this sanctification regards the unbelieving parent not *for his own sake*, but as a *medium* affecting the transmission of covenant privilege to the *children of a believer*.

A simple, and we think, satisfactory account of the matter, is this :

Among the early conversions to Christianity, it often happened, that the gospel was believed by a

woman, and rejected by her husband; or believed by a man, and rejected by his wife. One of the invariable effects of Christianity being a tender concern in parents for the welfare of their offspring; a question was naturally suggested by such a disparity of religious condition, as to the light in which the children were to be viewed. Considering the one parent, they were to be accounted “holy;” but considering the other, they were to be accounted “unclean.” Did the character of the former place them *within* the church of God; or the character of the latter *without* it? or did they belong partly to the church and partly to the world, but wholly to neither? The difficulty was a real one; and calculated to excite much distress in the minds of parents who, like the primitive Christians, did not treat the relation of their little ones to the church of God, as a slight and uninteresting affair.

Paul obviates it by telling his Corinthian friends, that in this case where the argument *for* the children appears to be perfectly balanced by the argument *against* them, God has graciously inclined the scale in *favour* of his people: so that *for the purpose of conveying to their infants the privilege of being within his covenant and church*, the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife by the husband. If it were not so, it must be the reverse; because it is impossible that

a child should be born in *two* contrary moral states : *then*, the believing husband being rendered “unclean” by his wife ; and the believing wife “unclean” by her husband, their children would also be “unclean,” i. e. would be born, not in a state of separation *to* God ; but in a state of separation *from* him ; like those who are without the bond of his covenant, and, not being *appropriated* to him, are “common” or “unclean.” But now, saith the apostle, God has determined that the parental influence shall go the other way. That instead of the interest which a child has in his covenant, by virtue of the faith of one parent, being made void by the infidelity of the other ; the very fact of being married to a believer, shall so far *control* the effect of unbelief—shall so far *consecrate* the infidel party, as that the children of such a marriage shall be accounted of the covenanted seed ; shall be members of the church—*Now*, saith Pau<sup>l</sup>, *they are HOLY*.

The passage which we have explained, establishes the church membership of infants in another form. For it assumes the principle that when *both* parents are reputed believers, their children belong to the church of God as *a matter of course*. The whole difficulty proposed by the Corinthians to Paul grows out of this principle. Had he taught, or they understood, that *no* children, be their parents believers or unbelievers, are to be

accounted members of the church, the difficulty could not have existed. For if the faith of *both* parents could not confer upon a child the privilege of membership, the faith of only *one* of them certainly could not. The point was decided. It would have been mere impertinence to teaze the apostle with queries which carried their own answer along with them. But on the supposition that when both parents were members, their children, also, were members; the difficulty is very natural and serious. "I see," would a Corinthian convert exclaim, "I see the children of my Christian neighbours, owned as members of the church of God; and I see the children of others, who are unbelievers, rejected with themselves. I believe in Christ myself; but my husband, my wife, believes not. "What is to become of *my* children? Are they to be admitted with myself? or are they to be cast off with my partner?"

"Let not your heart be troubled," replies the apostle: "God reckons them to the believing, not to the unbelieving, parent. It is enough that they are *yours*. The infidelity of your partner shall never frustrate their interest in the covenant of your God. They are 'holy' because you are so."

This decision put the subject at rest. And it lets us know that one of the reasons, if not the chief reason of the doubt, whether a married person should continue, after conversion, in the con-



jugal society of an infidel partner, arose from a fear lest such continuance should exclude the children from the church of God. Otherwise it is hard to comprehend why the apostle should dissuade them from separating, by such an argument as he has employed in the text. And it is utterly inconceivable how such a doubt could have entered their minds, had not the membership of infants, born of believing parents, been undisputed, and esteemed a high privilege; so high a privilege, as that the apprehension of losing it made conscientious parents at a stand whether they ought not rather to break the ties of wedlock, by withdrawing from an unbelieving husband or wife. Thus, the *origin* of this difficulty on the one hand, and the *solution* of it, on the other, concur in establishing our doctrine, that, by the appointment of God himself, the *infants of believing parents are BORN members of his church.*

We shall close this number, already too long, though but an outline, with another decision on the same general question, from the pen of the same apostle.

Treating of the future restoration of the Jews, he says, *They also, if they bide not still in unbelief, shall be GRAFTED in; for God is able to graff them in AGAIN. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature; and wert grafted, contrary to nature, into a good olive tree; how much more shall*

*these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their OWN OLIVE TREE.* Rom. xi. 23, 24.

That the olive tree signifies, and *can* signify nothing else than the *visible church* with the privileges dispensed in it, we abundantly proved in our second number. The Jews never did belong, *nationally*, to any but the external church; and from no other could they be cut off. But, saith Paul, these Jews, “the natural branches,” have been “broken off,” and thou the Gentile, “grafted in.” Grafted into what? The *same* tree from which the others were cut away. Then, not only is there a *visible church*; but it is the *very same* from which the Jews have been excommunicated. Or else the apostle has asserted a falsehood. For if the New Testament church be not the same, in substance, with the church to which the Jews belonged, it is not true that the Gentiles have been “grafted into the olive tree,” from which the Jews have been broken off; but a *new tree* has been planted: a flat and formal contradiction to the word of God! which says, that the *old tree stands*, and that other *branches* are grafted in. Well, then, the Gentiles occupy in the church the place which the Jews did before their expulsion. The new branch with *its buds* is transferred to the good olive tree, and grows in its fatness. Whatever privileges, therefore, the Jews had formerly,

as *members of the church of God*, all these, at least, their Gentile successors enjoy. But the membership of their infants was one of these privileges; a principle one. Therefore, the children of Gentile believers are members of the Christian church.

Turn, now, the argument. The Jews are to be restored. These, the “natural branches,” shall be “grafted in again”—shall be “grafted into their *own olive tree*.” AGAIN! Into their OWN olive tree! Then *their own* tree is preserved. But mark, the Gentile branches are not to be cut off. So then, the Jews and Gentiles will belong to *one* church; will be branches of the *same* olive tree. But they are to be grafted into their *own* tree, says Paul. The consequence returns irresistibly upon us. The church of God under both dispensations is *one and the same*. Or else the apostle has told another falsehood. For if it be not the same, as the Jews are to come into the Christian church, they will not be grafted into their *own* olive tree, but into another.

But the Jews, before their excision, were with *their children*, members of the church. If, then, they be *reinstated*; or as the apostle expresses it, grafted in *again*, their children also must be members of the church, or else God will break his promise, and the Holy Spirit of truth, deceive their hope. The restored Jews, however, can derive their privileges only through the medium of the

New Testament church. The membership of their infants is one of the privileges to be so derived; therefore, the *infants of believing parents are members of the New Testament church.*—Which was to be demonstrated.

# CHURCH OF GOD.

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No. VI.

*Uses.*

BELIEVING that the preceding numbers contain a true and scriptural account of the visible church in general, we think it proper, before inquiring into its particular provisions, to point out some of the ends which it is calculated to answer, and some of the consequences which result from our doctrine.

Let us briefly recapitulate.

Adults who make a credible profession of their faith, are to be admitted as members.

Children of believing parents, that is, of visible Christians, are members in virtue of their birth. So that the Catholic church consists of all them who, throughout the world, profess the true religion; and of their children.

This great community, which is but one, has

special external covenant relations to the Most High God ; the fundamental principle of which is, a dispensation of grace through a Redeemer ; and, as an effect of these relations, enjoys special privileges in which her members have a right to participate according to their circumstances.

From the very nature of the case, it must and does happen, that many of these members are Christians only in name : such as never have been, and never shall be, vitally united to Christ, but shall die in their iniquity. Yet if their unsoundness be not detected ; if by no outward act they reproach that worthy name by which they are called, their right, even to sacramental privilege, is as firm and full as the right of a believer who shall hold the highest place among the saved. The reason, which has been illustrated already, is, that Christian ordinances are administered by men ; and the secret state of the soul before God is not, and cannot be, their rule of judgment. In this case, appearances and realities are, to them, the same ; because they have no means of forming an opinion of realities but from appearances : and, therefore, officers in the house of God may, with the most perfect good conscience and fidelity, give the seals of his covenant to such as shall turn out to be sons and daughters of perdition. If it were not so, not one among all the ministers of the gospel since the

ascension of our Lord Jesus, could escape being arraigned for treason at his bar. For not one of them would dare to affirm, that he had not, in a single instance, given the sacramental sign to an unbeliever.

Seeing, then, that false professors and true ; the sincere and the hypocritical ; elected men and reprobates, are mingled together in the external church ; and that there are no human means of separating the “chaff which shall be burnt up with unquenchable fire,” from the “wheat which shall be gathered into the garner” of God, what purpose does such a constitution serve ? Does not the idea that such a strange commixture should be a church of God shock the mind ? Is it not unfriendly to piety ? And would it not be much better if saints alone were to be admitted within her pale, to the utter and absolute exclusion of hypocrites and reprobates ?

Doubtless many think so. For men are apt to conceit that they can mend the works of God. And such multitudes of experiments have been made, in this way, upon his church, that if he had not been her keeper she would have perished ages ago. When he shall employ us to set up a church, it will be soon enough to display our skill, In the mean time, let us thankfully submit to his appointments ; and humbly inquire whether we cannot discover in that very constitution which

has been described, something not unworthy of his wisdom and his goodness too.

There is a strong analogy between the kingdom of heaven in the *heart*, in the *world*, and in the *church*. Not one of them is free from evil : nor is designed to be so in the present state. The *world* teems with sin ; it is full of plagues and curses : but it is still *God's* world ; the subject of his government, and the theatre of his grace. The renewed heart is infested with depravity. Sin dwells in them who bear most of their Saviour's image, enjoy the largest share of his communion, and approach the nearest to his perfection. *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.\** But this “ sin that dwelleth in them,” does not hinder them from being in soul and body, *the temples of the Holy Ghost.†* It would be quite as reasonable to maintain, that a Christian cannot be a child of God because *there is a law in his members warring against the law of his mind :‡* or that the world is not God's world because *the tumult of those that rise up against him increaseth continually ;||* as to maintain that a church composed partly of converts and partly of the unconverted, is not for that reason, a true nor a scriptural church. The neighbourhood and conflict of good and evil in this life is

\* 1 John i. 8.

† 1 Cor. vi. 19.

‡ Rom. vii. 23.

|| Ps. lxxiv. 23.



one of those depths which nothing but folly attempts to fathom; yet while the mystery is unsearchable, the doctrine is clear, and the fact notorious. Whoever, then, shall deny that God has so constituted his church here as to include concealed enemies in the midst of real friends; and has left no method of drawing, with certainty, the line of practical discrimination; must go further, and deny that he has so constituted his world as to admit the introduction of sin, and has left no method of expelling it: or has so constituted the plan of salvation, as to allow corrupt affections to reside in the hallowed breast, and has left no method of extirpating them. The objection is precisely the same in the three cases. He who can answer it in one, can answer it in all; and he who cannot answer it in all, can answer it in none.

On the other hand, whoever can find it consistent with the divine perfection, that wicked men should be in the world; and wicked propensities in the soul of a believer, and yet the world be acknowledged by God as his world, and the believer as his child; will find it equally consistent with his perfection that servants of sin as well as servants of righteousness should belong to the church, and yet she be owned of him as his church.

Nor will this reasoning operate, in the smallest degree, against her sacredness as holy to the Lord; nor impair our obligation to promote her

purity; nor afford the slightest countenance to careless admission into her communion, or the relaxation of her discipline toward the scandalous. For although God will glorify himself by bringing good out of evil, it is damnable in *us* to “do evil that good may come.”\* And although he, in that sovereignty which “giveth no account of any of his matters,” has permitted and overrules the sin of the creature for purposes worthy of himself; yet we are not seated in the throne of sovereignty; we are under law; and the law of our duty is plain, so that “he may run who readeth,” that we are to *resist, even unto blood, striving against sin.*† It no more follows that his church is not to thrust from her embrace the known servants of sin, because her vigilance may be eluded and her efforts defeated; than it follows that believers may indulge themselves in the commission of sin, because all their exertions will be insufficient to destroy it while they are in the body; or than it follows, that crimes are to stalk unquestioned through the earth, because they cannot be entirely cut off. The more closely this analogy is pressed, the more exactly will it be found to hold. And hence arises the general reason why the church of God, according to our principles, is well and wisely constituted—It is precisely adapt-

\* Rom. iii. 8.

† Heb. xii. 8.

ed to the state of our world, and to the course of his own dispensations.

The analogy which we have now pointed out might convince the intelligent Christian, and silence the modest one. To the former it offers a decisive character of truth; and the latter will ask no better argument for the goodness of a constitution, than it is a constitution of God. But we need not rest the matter here. Without prying into the reservations of his wisdom, we may perceive some valuable ends to be answered by the mixed state of his church.

1. It reduces the quantity of actual sin.

We cannot too deeply deplore the fact that many “have a name to live and are dead.” They are numbered with the people of God. Their reputation among their fellow professors is pure. Yet they have not “passed from death unto life.” A terrible condition, no doubt; and a preparation for a terrible doom. But let us consider what would be the effect if all those sins should be disclosed in this world which shall be disclosed when the “secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest.” Or, if this be too strong; what would be the effect, should those corruptions which are not subdued by divine grace, be set free from the restraints supplied through the external church. Could you unmask the hypocrite, and throw him at once out of your fellowship, and confidence, all

the motives and influence which serve to curb his lusts, and limit their mischief, would cease to operate; and that fountain of iniquity which is now shut up in darkness would break out into open day, and pour its poisonous streams in every direction. It is impossible to conjecture how far the law of God's house, and liberal intercourse with his people, frustrate the worst designs of hell by *shackling* the depravity of its servants. Some, perhaps, may contend that it were better to see every bad man in his own colours, that we might completely "purge out the old leaven." Their zeal is not according to knowledge—They inadvertently reproach the wisdom of God, who does not permit such a discovery to be made. And what would they have? Would it be better that an enemy to God should give scope to his enmity, and spread infection and death all around him, than that the repression of it should tie up his hands, and render him comparatively harmless? Would it be better that he should blaspheme the name of God, than that he should treat it with external reverence? Better, to set before his children or companions an example of hideous profligacy, than an example of decorum! to teach them to swear, steal, lie, profane the sabbath, deride their bible, mock the ordinances of religion, than to inculcate upon them lessons of truth, of probity, of respect to the name, the day, the

word, and the worship of God ! Go a step further, and say that it would be better to lay aside all the control of civil government, and let loose the myriads of rogues and traitors whom the community unwittingly cherishes in her bosom, than to keep them under the salutary awe of the tribunals of Justice, of the dungeon and the halter.

Besides, men who only profess religion, while they are strangers to its power, have much more extensive connexions with those who profess none, than real Christians can or ought to have. There is not that mutual repugnance which renders society reserved and suspicious ; and thus they become a medium of transmitting the *moral* influence of the gospel to thousands and tens of thousands who yield no intentional obedience to its authority. Real Christians act directly upon professed ones ; and these, again, upon men who make no profession at all ; and thus, through an infinite number of channels unnoticed and unknown, Christianity streams its influence over human Society ; gives a tone to public opinion, and a purity to public and individual manners, which are derivable from no other source. The very infidel is by this means instructed in all the truth he knows. He has an impulse given to his faculties ; a check to his passions ; and a rein to his actions, of which he is unconscious. But if you could turn out of the church all who are not heirs

according to the promise of eternal life, you would, in a great measure, defeat the benign influence of the gospel upon the civil community ; because you would destroy many points of their contract, and remove thousands altogether from its sphere of action ; or, which is the same thing, contract the sphere so as to leave out thousands who are now within it. Admitting, then, without scruple, the just cause of grief which is afforded by the Canaanite's being in the house of the Lord, we are consoled with observing how he brings good out of evil. Satan thrusts himself and his accomplices into the assembly of the saints ; and God converts the intrusion into a chain for them both. Thus the visible church, composed of believers and hypocrites, effects, by this very principle, an incalculable diminution of the actual sin which would otherwise be in the world.

2. It diminishes the misery of human life.

This is a direct consequence of prevented sin. For in proportion as the laws of God are violated, is the aggregate suffering of the community increased : and in proportion as they are respected, is its character amiable, and its condition prosperous. Who can doubt, even for a moment, that the abandonment of all nominal Christians to the unsanctified propensities of their nature, would multiply crimes and accelerate individual and public ruin ? And who can doubt, that the check im-

posed on these propensities by an outward profession of the cross of Christ, averts calamity which would otherwise be both certain and severe? Let us not overlook the immense difference between temporal and eternal good; and between the means by which they are respectively procured. The religion which will not save a soul from hell, may yet save a nation from destruction. It is only upon gross transgression, freely and obstinately committed, that God inflicts those evils which he calls “his judgments.” There may be much secret impiety; much smothered opposition to his government, but it must break out; must become flagrant; must resist the milder correctives, before he “arise to shake terribly the earth.” It is for no small provocation that he “bathes his sword in heaven;” nor is it easy for a people to “fill their cup.” He may visit; he may chastise; always, however, for open sin. But the cry for vengeance must be loud and long before he resign a land to desolation, and mark it so irreversibly for his curse, that *though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they should deliver neither son nor daughter; but merely their own souls by their righteousness;\* and though Moses and Samuel stood before him, his mind could not be toward it.†* We are not unaccustomed to the clamour which some, *who know not what they say, nor whercof they affirm,*

\* Ezek. xiv.

† Jerem. xv.

and yet *desire to be teachers of the law*, raise against this doctrine, as calculated to feed the pride of self-righteousness; to spread Arminianism; to disparage the grace and merit of Christ; and other things of the same sort. But there is a pride which needs mortification as much as any other, although it escapes their notice; and that is, the pride of conceited ignorance. Little as we incline to flatter vanity, we shall not attack it upon principles which would prostrate along with it the righteousness of God, and cover the pages of his blessed word with contradictions and lies. We hold it to be a maxim almost self-evident, that abounding and impudent wickedness will bring more wrath, and therefore more misery, upon a land, than wickedness shut up in the bosom, or driven, by the commanding aspect of truth, into secret corners. If our citizens, who are perpetually praising Christianity, and perpetually insulting it, were to yield a *decent* deference to its authority—if our magistrates, instead of sacrificing their allegiance to God, whose ministers they are,\* on the altar of a wretched and fickle popularity, were to become a more steady and uniform “terror to evil doers,” the storm which blackens over our trembling country would be dissipated; and the smiling skies invite every man to resume his seat “under his vine and under his fig-tree.”

\* Rom. xiii.



The preventing of sin, then, being a prevention of misery, the world owes much of its freedom from misery to the influence of the visible church, *constituted as it is*, in restraining sin—more, much more, than it would owe to such a constitution as would exclude all nominal Christians; the number of them who are reconciled to God by the death of his son, remaining the same. We say the number of unconverted remaining the same. For it cannot be doubted, that as two real Christians are better and more useful than one *real* and one *apparent* Christian; so the two latter are much better and more useful than one real Christian, and one openly wicked man. And as, for the same reason, it would be infinitely more desirable, that the whole world should be in the church, and the whole church converted, than that there should be a mixture of clean and unclean in her communion; so it is infinitely more desirable, and more conducive to peace and happiness, that while this purity is unattainable, the appearance of godliness in those who have none, should encourage the hearts and strengthen the hands of those who have it; and thus hypocrisy concur with sincerity in causing “iniquity, as ashamed, to hide her head.”

There is another view of this point which comes home to the heart. To that question “Why must believers die?” The following an-

swer among others, has been returned. If believers were exempted from the common mortality ; if, like Enoch and Elijah, they should go to heaven without “ putting off their tabernacle,” then Death would reveal the secrets of the eternal world. It would be known by the very manner of his departing hence, whether an individual was saved or lost. What anguish, what horror, what distraction, would fill the souls and the families of God’s dear children ; to be assured, by the simple fact of a friend or kinsman’s dying, that he was gone to hell ! But would not the very same effect be produced, were all unbelievers shut out of the church ? The mere circumstance of their exclusion would prove their unbelief ; and their death in unbelief, would prove that they had perished. The tender mercies of God relieve his people from an intolerable load of suffering, by subjecting them, in common with others, to the decree of death. And that constitution of his visible church, which, by admitting members upon external evidence, admits hypocrites as well as the sincere, is a necessary counterpart to the law of death. Visible departure from the world, whether into his church or into eternity, lies through an entrance which God has so constructed, that any farther than a judgment may be formed from external evidence, he alone “ knoweth them that are his.” Both are provisions of

one gracious system. They, therefore, who would so model the Christian church as to keep or to expel from her communion, all ungodly men who do not show themselves to be such by their ungodly principles or deeds, are labouring to defeat the mercy displayed in the death of a believer, and to wring his heart with agony during the whole period of his life. Eternal thanks to the divine compassions ! They cannot succeed. The counsel of the Lord is against them ; and “ the counsel of the Lord, *that* shall stand.”

3. The mixed character of the church contributes directly to her prosperity. It does so,

By extending her resources :

By increasing her numbers :

By affording protection.

*First*, The resources of the church, we mean her outward resources, are extended by her present constitution. These, in general, are *pecuniary* aid, and the aid of *talents*.

It is evident, that *all* those means by which the gospel is supported and propagated, are not furnished by real Christians ; and equally evident that the whole supply is very scanty. If you should deduct the part which comes from the pockets of unconverted men, the balance would not preserve Christianity from being starved out of the world. Indeed, from the wretched provision which is commonly made for her maintenance, one might

conclude, with little offence against charity, that the great majority of professed Christians, are not unwilling to try how far this experiment of *starving* may prove successful. That is their sin, and it shall be their punishment. Let them think of it in those moments when they recollect that they are as accountable for the use of their property, as for the use of their liberty : and that there is to be a day of reckoning, in which no robbers shall appear to less advantage, or be treated with less indulgence, than those, who in this life, have “robbed God.”\*

But small as the encouragement is for any, who by following another honest calling, can procure a tolerable livelihood, and lay up even a little for their families, to devote themselves to the religious welfare of society, it would be much smaller were none to be accounted Christians here, who shall not be accounted such hereafter. Go, with the power of detecting hypocrisy ; cast out of the church, all whose fellowship is not “with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.” And your next step must be to nail up the doors of our places of worship. We are in the habit of praying that the Lord, who has declared that “the silver is his, and the gold is his,” would influence the hearts of the opulent to bring their offerings into his courts : We thank him, when,

\* Mal. iii. 8, 9.

in a manner somewhat uncommon, he hears our prayers, and sends the bounty; and yet we overlook the daily occurrence of this very thing which is the object of our petitions and of our gratitude ! He has incorporated the principle in the frame of his visible church, and it operates with regular, though silent, efficacy. But if all who appear to be Christians, and are not, were excluded, the effect must be to diminish, in a most distressing degree, the actual pecuniary resources of the church. For men who are marked as enemies, will never lend her the same aid as men who are supposed to be friends. And thus the absolute purification of the church upon earth, would overthrow the plan which the wisdom of God has devised, to cause his very foes to assess their own purses in carrying on that dispensation of grace which, at heart, they do not love; and which, if left to themselves, they would resist with all their might.

The same reason applies to *talent*.

Revelation is never more completely robed in light, than when she is brought fairly and fully to the bar of evidence. The attacks of infidels have furnished her friends with both opportunities and incitements to dispel the mist by which she has been occasionally or partially obscured; and she has gone forth “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.”

What is true of Christianity in general, is equally true of its peculiar doctrines. The more rigidly they are examined, the more worthy do they appear of God; the more perfectly adapted to the condition of man; the more consistent with each other, with the lights of pure philosophy, and the discoveries of real science.

But these results which have shed, and are shedding, their lustre upon the evangelical system, combine the researches of the ablest men in the most literary periods of the world. There is no department of human knowledge which God has not laid under tribute to his word. Linguists, mathematicians, astronomers, botanists, mineralogists; chymistry, physiology, and medicine; the antiquarian, the traveller, the natural, civil, and ecclesiastical historian; commerce, agriculture, mechanics, and the fine arts—are all to be found waiting at the temple of God, opening their treasures, and presenting their gifts. Whoever has the least acquaintance with things older than himself, and without the petty circle of his personal agency, knows that the mass of all valuable learning, since the introduction of Christianity, ever has been, and is yet, in the hands of professed Christians. They have employed it in her defence, to an extent and with an effect of which thousands, who are now reaping the benefits of their efforts, can have no possible conception.

Yet, certainly, among those who have thus fortified the citadel of truth, many were believers in name only, and never tasted the salvation to the influence of which they contributed. “How much better,” you will exclaim, “had they loved the Redeemer not in name only, but in deed and in truth !” How much better indeed ! But how much worse, we rejoin, had they sided with his open enemies, and levelled *against* his word, all that artillery which they employed *for* it. And that such would have been the consequence had none been admitted into his church, who were not partakers of his grace, is as evident, as that a cause, left to its own operation, will produce its proper effect. We are well apprised of the contempt which some men affect to heap upon human learning. And we are equally well apprised that in this their hostility their ignorance and vain glory have at least as large a share as their spirituality of mind. Nor are we regardless of the mischief which “unsanctified learning” has done in the church of God ; and of the jealousy with which, on that account, many serious people look upon learned men. But why ? Shall we never distinguish between *use* and *abuse* ? Learning is good in itself. The evil lies not in its nature, but in its application. Because some have prostituted their learning to pervert the truth and institutions of our Lord Jesus

Christ, shall we not accept the aid of the same weapon, rightfully used, to vindicate them? Shall we commit them to the illiterate and the stupid, in expectation of miracles to elicit wisdom from the mouth of folly? and bribe letters and genius to enlist themselves in the service of the devil? The very same objection strikes at wealth, at strength; at every power, moral and physical, which God has seen fit to create. Because “unsanctified” opulence has spread corruption through Christian communities, is it desirable that all Christians be beggars? Because strong men, if they be of quarrelsome temper, may keep a whole neighbourhood under the terrors of assault and battery, would it therefore be desirable that all Christians should be pigmies? It is the nature of every thing to work harm when misdirected, in exact proportion to its power of working good when directed well. This is a law of God’s own enacting : and is one of the means by which he makes sin to punish itself. Therefore, to reject a potent agency because its perversion will involve calamity proportioned to its vigour, is the very rectified spirit of absurdity. Carry your principle through; and tell your maker that he did a foolish thing in creating angels, because such of them as, by their fall, have become devils, can do infinitely more mischief than if they had been men! No—Let us put away these childish



things. If unconverted men get into the church under the cloak of a credible profession; if they remain there undetected; if they bring their wealth and their talent to the support of the Christian cause, let us accept the boon with all thankfulness. It is so much of the arm of iniquity palsied; nay, more, it is so much clear gain from the interests of hell to the comforter of the church of God. If the gospel is to be maintained, or a starving disciple to be fed, it will make no difference in the market whether the dollar was given by a hypocrite or a believer. And if the bible be happily illustrated; or its adversaries victoriously encountered, the truth is still the same, whether the talent which demonstrates it be connected with the spirit of faith or the heart of unbelief. The excess of these two benefits over and above what could be performed by Christians alone, is the advantage, in point of *resouree*, which the church derives from her present constitution, over and above that which she would enjoy were none to enter into her communion but true converts.

The *second* way in which the mixed character of the visible church contributes directly to her prosperity, is by *increasing her numbers*.

The gospel is the great means of turning men *from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God*. For this purpose it is necessary that they and it should meet. *How shall they call on*

*him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?\** Whatever brings sinners within the reach of the means of salvation, and places them under the “joyful sound,” puts them into the way in which alone they have a right to expect the pardoning and the renewing mercy of their God. Let it, then, be considered, how many members of the external church have remained for years in their habit of decent but unprofitable attendance upon the public worship of God, and have at last been arrested by his grace, and *made heirs according to the hope of eternal life*. “Their number,” it may be objected, “is smaller than we suppose; and forms too inconsiderable a portion of the saved to have any weight in the argument.”

We believe this, upon the whole, to be true. It was long ago observed, and the observation ought to sink down into the hearts of both the old and young professor, that where the gospel is enjoyed in its purity, it is the ordinary method of providence to call sinners into the fellowship of Jesus Christ in the *days of their youth*. Among those who have enjoyed from their childhood the benefit of religious instruction, of holy example, of sound and faithful ministrations, the instances of conversion after middle life, are, for the most part, ex-

\* Rom. x. 14.

tremely rare. Let the aged Christian run over, in his mind, such of these instances as have come within his own knowledge, and we shall be much deceived if his list be not very short. Yet small as is their *relative* number, their amount, absolutely taken, is not contemptible. But had a power of judging the state of the soul before God, from other than external evidence, been the rule of admission into his church, who can doubt that the rejection of these members would have banished the most of them from his sanctuary altogether, and left them to perish in their iniquity. It is vain to reply that “*the Lord knoweth them that are his*, and will take care that none of them be lost.” He *does* know them: he *will* take care that none of them be lost; but he will reveal his knowledge and exercise his care, by the intervention of means: and the admission of members into his church upon external evidence *only*, appears, from the nature of the thing, and is proved by the event, to be one of his means.

The operation, however, of this cause of her increase, is not confined to the persons of late converts: nor would our argument be much affected, were they still fewer, or were there none at all. Thousands, who *have the form of godliness without the power*, and who die as they live, *in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity*, are heads of families. By their authority and example, children,

apprentices, servants, who, otherwise, would rove unrestrained like *the wild asses colt*, are kept from much gross and open wickedness : they learn to respect the sabbath day ; they come under Christian instruction ; they attend the institutions of public worship ; to multitudes of them God blesses his own ordinances for their eternal life. And thus, while the parent or the master dies in his sin, the child, the apprentice, or the servant, led by his own hand to the religious precept and the house of prayer, becomes an *heir of God, and a fellow heir with Christ in glory*. Nay, individuals without families, are often the unconscious instruments of salvation to others. No human being is so poor as not to have an acquaintance. We know it to be a principle in human nature, that men love to draw their friends into connexions with which they themselves are pleased. It is a necessary effect of man's social character ; and is no where more regular and extensive than in his religious associations. Many causes beside, and without, conversion from sin to God, render men zealous in promoting the credit and prosperity of their respective churches. The prejudice of birth the force of habit, the preference of judgment, attachment to a particular minister or circle of friends, engage much warm and active patronage to ecclesiastical bodies. One companion brings another ; that one a third ; and thus, by a most

complicated system of individual action and reaction, great multitudes are assembled in the house of God, who otherwise would never cross its threshold. Sometimes a person, induced by the persuasion of another to hear a certain preacher, or occupy a seat in a certain church, has been awakened to a sense of eternal things ; has been “ translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son ;” and sealed up by the holy spirit of promise, unto the day of redemption,” when his persuader has remained unmoved, or even thrown away his profession, and turned an open reprobate.

Withdraw, then, all the families of nominal Christians, and all their acquaintances whom they allure to the public ordinances—withdraw the acquaintances of single men and women, especially those in younger life, and after you have made the deduction, look at your places of worship ! Whole rows of seats which were filled with persons of decent, respectful, and even serious deportment, are empty. The greater part of those from whom converts were to be drawn to replace dying believers, and perpetuate the knowledge of Jesus and the resurrection, is gone. The church has lost one of her chief holds upon the world : she has closed up a wide door of her own access to unbelievers ; and has actually banished them, by hundreds, from the mercy-seat.

There is an exception to this reasoning too obvious and plausible to pass unnoticed.

“Facts appear to be against us. Who composed the audiences of the apostles? Who flocked to the sound of the evangelical trumpet, at the blessed reformation from popery? What is, at this day, the most successful method of crowding the churches, even with those who do not so much as profess to be religious? Is it not the plain and undisguised declaration of that very gospel which, it is said, the people will not hear without the help of hypocrites to bring them. If you want to empty a place of worship, court your Christians in name only; let nothing be done to shock their prejudices or alarm their pride. If you want to fill a place of worship, *know nothing* in your ministrations *but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*”

A mistake is never so imposing as when it misapplies undoubted truths. We admit all the facts here stated, but cannot see how they invalidate our reasoning. Because they have occurred in the history of the church, so conducted as not to exclude the secret deceiver. Her character has always been mixed. The pretensions of some men to purify her in such a manner as to admit only genuine converts, are vanity and wind. They never did, they never can, it is impossible, in the nature of things, they ever should, act upon other than external evidence, if they act upon evidence

at all. Could a method be devised of distinguishing the *real* from the *apparent* Christian, not only would it cease to be the Lord's prerogative "to know them that are his;" but the whole complexion and character of his church would be altered. She would be *another church altogether from what he has made her*. And since he has adapted the tenour of his providence, and the influences of his grace, to her *actual constitution*, it is idle to imagine that the course of events which is connected with her *present* constitution, would attend her under a constitution *essentially different*. The church, framed as some good men would have her, not only never existed, but, for aught they can show, would be utterly unfit for this world of ours; and would utterly fail of accomplishing her ends. Nor can they assign any tolerable reason for a belief that of all the effects which *now* flow from the dispensation of the gospel, a *single one* would be produced upon a change of the system.

An advantage, therefore, and not a small one, of the mixed condition of the church is, that it collects within her pale, and introduces to her ordinances, multitudes who otherwise would remain "without," but, now, "shall be heirs of salvation."

A *third* benefit directly arising from the mixed condition of the church, is *protection*.

In times of affliction, the witnesses for truth are often more, and in the times of prosperity fewer,

than they are supposed to be. Could the line be accurately drawn between sound and unsound professors, the former would frequently find themselves in a very small minority. Such a disclosure would not only dispirit their minds and repress their exertions, but subject them to taunt, to insult, and to oppression. We must bear in remembrance that the "world which lieth in wickedness," never wants the inclination to persecute them who are "chosen out of it." The *computed* number of Christians serves to check that inclination; and it is often checked so effectually that its existence is denied; and Christians themselves are half persuaded, that the world is less hostile to them and their master than in the days of primitive peril. But could they be distinctively pointed out, this erring charity of theirs would get its rebuke in their ruin. The fire would feed upon their flesh, and scaffolds stream with their blood, at the instance, and by the agency, of many who now treat them with civility and respect. Set them up as a mark, by exposing their weakness, and nothing short of a perpetual miracle would hinder "the men of the earth" from exterminating them at a stroke, and, with them, the church of the living God.

But as the case stands, his overruling providence uses the nominal, for a shield to the real, Christian. Apparent believers occupy a middle



ground between the church of the redeemed and the world which knows not God. Belonging in pretence to the one, and in fact to the other, they interpose a medium between the two, which often prevents a destructive contact.

The malice of the persecutor sleeps, and his arm is idle, from the difficulty of selecting his victim and pointing his blow. Were he to strike at random, he would smite those whom he wishes to spare, and miss those whom he wishes to smite. Thus there is a secret, and silent, but real and effective, alliance between unconverted men in the church and out of it, which the controlling hand of God makes to subserve the safety and comfort of his own people.

Such are some of the ends, “holy, just, and good,” which we, circumscribed as is our knowledge of the ways of God, can perceive to be accomplished by the mixed condition of his church. That there are no others most worthy of his wisdom, though infinitely above the reach of ours, nothing but inebriating folly will dare to pronounce. What ultimate relations his church may have to his universal kingdom, it were impertinent, if not profane, so much as to conjecture. Suffice it that while every step of our progress enjoins sobriety of thought; restrains the indiscretion of zeal; and rebukes the spirit of intrusive igno-

rance; enough is discovered to remove the modest scruple, and satisfy the reverential inquiry.

In a preceding part of this discussion, we contracted an engagement which we shall here fulfil.

To our doctrine which unequivocally admits that the visible church is so constituted as to contain a mixture of good men and bad, without any means of distinguishing, precisely, the one from the other; and which maintains that the infants of parents, or a parent, professing godliness, are, by the fact of their birth, members of the church, and intitled to the sacramental seal of their relation, it is objected, that “we debase and prostitute the sacraments; that we necessarily give the seal of spiritual blessings to multitudes who have not and never shall have, “any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God”—that by such an application we not only put a seal to a blank, which is mere mockery; but call upon the God of Truth to certify a lie, which is yet worse than mockery—that it is peculiarly absurd to administer to infants an ordinance coupled by the scriptures with faith in Christ, which infants are confessedly incapable of exercising.”

This is specious, and well calculated to gain the popular ear. In reasoning, as in other things, it is commonly much easier to get into a difficulty than to get out of it. Objections to any fixed order are always at hand, because its operation

is always felt: but answers to those objections are not so ready, because the reasons of the order cease to be observed, as time is always removing them further from our knowledge. On this account it frequently requires more sense and search to refute one cavil, than to propose twenty. From the same cause minds which feel the force of the cavil, are, in thousands of instances, unable to comprehend the refutation, even though it be mathematically correct. Hence shrewd, but petty sophism, and warm but cloudy declamation, against the visible church, make a quick impression, and exert a lasting influence, upon the weak, the illiterate, and the vain; while the reply to them can hardly hope to succeed, except among those who are capable of thinking; and among whom their progress is small, their proselytes few, and their dominion tottering.

In the present case there appears to have been, and to be, a peculiar infatuation. It has been demonstrated over and over, that the common, which are the strongest, objections to the doctrine of a visible church catholic, in so far at least, as it embraces the administration of the sacraments, apply with equal force to the system of their advocates; to an appointment unquestionably divine; and to the scriptural declarations concerning eternal life.

1. To the system of their advocates.

For if the baptising of infants who possibly may not, and, in many instances, certainly do not, prove to be true Christians, is chargeable with nullity and mockery; then the baptising of adults who possibly may not, and, in many instances, certainly do not, prove to be true Christians, is equally a nullity and a mockery: And therefore, unless we can know who shall be the heirs of salvation, and restrict the sacraments accordingly, their administration must always be involved in the charge of nullity and mockery. The opponents of infant baptism are so pinched by this retortion of their argument, that they endeavour to disembarass themselves by adopting the *reality* of Christian experience, that is, the *discovery* of a man's gracious state, as their principle of admission to sacramental privilege. The subterfuge will not avail them. They must found their discovery either on special revelation, or upon other evidence. To the former they cannot pretend; and the latter they must derive from one of two sources: either the fruits of grace in a man's life, which must be certified by others, and are *external evidence*; or the account which he himself gives of his own conversion. This to himself is *internal*, but the moment he mentions it to others, it becomes *testimony*, and like the former, it is *external evidence*.

Is, then, the judgment of his examiners liable to mistake? If not, how did they become infallible?

And, as the reality of a gracious state is the reason of their admitting a man into their communion, it must for ever remain a sufficient reason for retaining him: for those with whom we now contend, hold the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. How, then, can they ever justify the exclusion of any of their members? For as the possession of grace is the ground of his admission, nothing but the want of it can be a ground of his expulsion. Thus, in every case of excommunication, they stand self-convicted of having mistaken a man's character either when they took him in, or when they cast him out. From this alternative they have no escape but an acknowledgment that they were either faithless in the first instance, or tyrannical in the second. In so far, therefore, as they have ever had their communion, members, who, when "weighed in the balances, were found wanting," it is impossible not to perceive that they are in very same predicament with those whom they reproach as lax and carnal, that in the same proportion their own sacraments are nullities and mockeries; and that their blow at the advocates of the one visible church, recoils, with all its force, upon their own heads.

2. Their objections to our doctrine, are equally conclusive against an appointment unquestionably divine: we mean the ordinance of *circumcision*.

We must repeat, that as circumcision is expressly declared to be a “ seal of the righteousness of faith;” and as it was applied by God’s own commandment to infants eight days old, if the baptism of infants who know nothing of believing in Christ, is nullity and mockery ; an absurd and foolish ceremony : *then*, the circumcision of infants who knew nothing of that righteousness of faith which it sealed, was also a nullity and a mockery ; was also an absurd and foolish ceremony ; and the divine commandment which enjoined it, a foolish and an absurd commandment.

3. These same objections are applicable to the scriptural doctrine of eternal life. “ *He that BELIEVETH and is BAPTIZED, shall be saved,*” quotes the Anabaptist. We continue the quotation : “ *But he that BELIEVETH NOT, shall be DAMNED.*”\*

His argument is this :

Faith is required in order to baptism :

But infants cannot exercise faith :

Therefore, infants cannot be baptised.

We turn his argument thus :

Faith is required in order to salvation :

But infants cannot exercise faith :

Therefore, infants cannot be saved.

And so this famous syllogism begins with shut-

\* Mark xvi. 16.

ting out our children from the church of God ; and ends with consigning all of them who die in infancy to the damnation of hell !\*

We are quite weary and almost ashamed of repeating answers so trite as those which we are compelled to repeat, against still more trite objections ; but it is of importance to show that the heaviest stroke which the enemies of our doctrine level at us, is leveled, with equal strength, at themselves, their bible, and their God.

These remarks belong to that sort of argument which is called *argumentum ad hominem* : that is, an argument drawn from a man's own principles against himself. Its use is, not so much to prove the truth, as to disprove error : not to show that our own cause is good ; but that our adversary's reasoning is bad ; by showing that his weapon cannot pierce us but at the expense of transfixing himself : so that if he prevail against us, he will,

\* We do not say that the opposers of infant baptism hold such an opinion. Their most distinguished writers disown and repel it. But we say, that it necessarily results from their requiring faith, in *all* cases, as a qualification for baptism. They do not follow out their own position. They stop short at the point which suits their system. We take it up where they leave it, and conduct it to its direct and inevitable conclusion. Therefore, though we do not charge the *men* with maintaining that those who die in infancy, perish ; yet we charge this consequence upon their *argument* : For it certainly proves this, or it proves nothing at all.

in the moment of his victory, meet his own death on the point of his own sword.

We owe our readers more. We owe a decision on the merits of the case. Which we shall attempt by pointing out the true use of the sacramental seal.

We observed, in an early part of the discussion, that the difficulty which produces objections like those we have been exposing, is created by erroneous notions of the church of God ; by confounding visible members with his elect ; and his covenant to the church with his covenant of grace in Christ Jesus ; and that a proper application of this distinction will remove the difficulty.

The sacramental seal has appropriate relations to these covenants respectively , and thus we distinguish them.

1. It has visible relations to the visible church. Particularly,

(1.) It certifies, that the covenant of her God to her abides, and secures to her the perpetual enjoyment of her covenanted privileges.

(2.) It certifies, that the righteousness of faith and the salvation connected with it, are dispensed in the church ; and that there, and there alone, they are to be expected and sought.

(3.) It certifies, that the church is under the consecration of the redeemer's blood ; has an un-



ceasing interest in his mediation ; and access in her public character, and in the acts of direct worship, to “the holiest of all.”

(4.) It certifies, that the covenanted seed shall never be extinct ; but that “a seed shall serve the Lord Jesus, and shall be accounted to him for a generation, so long as the sun and the moon endure.”

(5.) It certifies that in the ordinary course of his providence, God will cause his saving mercy to run in the channel of his people’s families.

(6.) It certifies, that the individual sealed is himself a link in the great chain for transmitting down, from generation to generation, the knowledge and execution of God’s plan of grace.

(7.) It certifies, that the individual sealed has a right to the prayers, the instruction, the protection, and the discipline of the house of God.

(8.) In the baptism of infants, it certifies, that even *they* need the purification of that blood “which cleanses from all sin ;” and that it *can be applied* to them for their salvation. So that infant baptism is a visible testimony, incorporated with the ordinances of God’s worship, both to the guilt and depravity of our nature independently on actual transgression, and to the only remedy through our Lord Jesus Christ. If you reject it, you throw away the *only ordinance* which *directly* asserts the principle upon which the whole fabric of redemp-

tion is built, viz. that we are *by nature children of wrath*.

These are great and important uses of the sacramental seal; intimately connected with the faith, hope, and consolation of the church; and yet distinct and separate from an individual's interest in the salvation of God. Whatever shall become of him, they are grand, and solemn, and tender truths to which he is the instrument of perpetuating a testimony. Should he afterwards be a reproach, instead of an ornament, to the gospel; should he be "abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate," he shall perish indeed; but his perdition shall not affect the testimony given in his person, by the sacramental seal, to those blessed truths and privileges which we have enumerated. That testimony, that *sealed* testimony, is absolute; it is perfectly independent upon his spiritual state; and is precisely the same, whether he be "appointed to wrath, or to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. The sacramental seal has a special relation to the church invisible, and to the spiritual mercies of the covenant of grace.

Union with Christ; acceptance in his merits; participation of his Spirit; the fellowship of his death, of the power of his resurrection, of his everlasting love, and an interest in all the blessings of

his purchase, the sacraments do certainly represent and seal. These glorious objects always have been, and still are, in the most lively and affecting manner, exhibited to, and perceived by, the faith of believers; and their personal interest therein is at times certified to their consciences by “that holy spirit of promise whereby they are sealed to the day of redemption.” But all this is peculiar to the household of faith. It presupposes their interest in Christ; it is over and above the *general* uses which we just now specified; and is a secret between the omniscient God and the happy recipient.

The reader now sees, that the attestation of the sacramental seal is to be limited and extended by the *state of the receiver*. If he be only a member of the visible church, and merely within the bond of the external covenant, it certifies *in* him and *to* him whatever appertains to him in that relation, and nothing more. But if he be a member of the church invisible also, and interested in the saving benefits of the covenant of grace; it goes further, and certifies whatever appertains to him in *that* relation.

With the help of this obvious distinction we remove difficulties which are otherwise extremely perplexing; reconcile expressions otherwise irreconcilable; show the futility of objections founded on the want of grace in the individual sealed;

and demonstrate, as we promised, “ *that the seal of God’s covenant does, in every instance, certify absolute truth ; whether it be applied to a believer or an unbeliever ; to the elect or the reprobate.*”

# CHURCH OF GOD.

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## No. VII.

### *Results.*

FROM explaining the *uses* which the visible church, constituted as we have stated it to be, subserves, we pass on to some of its practical *results*. We mean certain principles, flowing, as necessary conclusions, from the doctrine which we have established; and which directly influence the whole system of ecclesiastical order.

1. The right and duty of *all them who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus*, to hold religious fellowship with each other, as God affordeth opportunity, are undisputed among Christians. Whatever be their diversities of opinion concerning the extent of that general description, and the religious fellowship founded upon it, yet within the limits which they prescribe to themselves respectively, they not only revere it as a duty, but esteem it as a privilege: They both insist upon its letter, and act in its spirit. A private

Christian goes from one congregation to another, and is received upon the evidence of his having been a member of that which he left. A minister of the gospel travels into parts distant from the place and society where he was ordained; and preaches the word, without scruple, in any other part of the world; and without a thought of his wanting a new commission. A person lawfully baptized is every where considered as under sacramental consecration to God in Christ; and nobody dreams of repeating his baptism. We make no account of the question about a valid or invalid ministry, because we confine ourselves, at present, to the communion which obtains among those who are agreed on this point.

We ask, then, what is the origin and reason of this communion? What is there to render it lawful and proper? "A common interest," you will say, "in the Christian ordinances, and the benefits dispensed by them." No doubt. But what is the basis of this common interest? How did it become common? "Christ has procured it for his church." Most certainly. But *what* church? The church of those who are "written in the Lamb's book of life?" Nothing more incontrovertible. Yet do you not perceive that you have laid the foundation of all religious fellowship in this—that the elect church of the redeemed is ONE? and that individual Christians enjoy their

spiritual immunities, merely as *parts of that great whole* to which Christ has bequeathed them? As members of the *one* “household of faith?” As citizens of the *one* “city of God?” That the right to spiritual privileges turns precisely on this point, “They are given to the church, and I am a member of the church.” But as there can be no external communion without an external church, and as all the sections of true believers all the world over, compose but one church invisible, it follows that the sections, or if you will, congregations, of visible believers, compose but one visible church. For it seems unreasonable to say, that the *whole* number of real Christians should not bear the same general relation to the *whole* number of professing Christians among whom they are included, with that which every *portion* of real Christians bears to that *portion* of professed Christians in which it is included. But the relation which a number of true Christians, in the bonds of Christian fellowship, bear to the external society to which they belong, is that of a *part* of the Church catholic invisible, to a *particular* visible church. Therefore, the relation which all the parts of the church invisible bear to all particular visible churches, is that of one general church invisible to one general church visible.

Again: The several portions of real Christians are related to their aggregate number, as *parts of*

a *great whole* which is the Catholic church invisible. Therefore, all the portions or congregations of professed Christians are related to each other as *parts of a great whole*, which is the Catholic church visible.

Hence it results, that as a right to those privileges which the Lord Jesus hath purchased for his redeemed, is founded in the circumstance of being a member of that church which is made up of them; so, a right to the external privileges which are dispensed by an external ministry in the external church is founded upon the fact of one's being a member of that church. It is on this ground, and on this alone, that the communion of churches is established. A man is not admitted to Christian fellowship in one congregation because he is a member of another—this would be a solecism. But he is admitted because he is a member of *the church catholic*; of which his communion in *any* particular church is received as evidence by every *other* particular church. He is free of the “city of God,” and therefore entitled to the immunities of citizenship in whatever part of the city he may happen to be. We may illustrate this matter by an analogy from civil affairs. A citizen of the state of New-York carries his citizenship with him to every spot under her jurisdiction. It is of no consequence in what county or town he resides; nor how often he removes



from one town or county to another ; nor whether he be at his own dwelling ; or on a visit to a friend ; or on a journey ; whatever privileges belong to him in his general character of a citizen of the state, he can claim any where and every where : for example, the right of voting for governour, provided he be legally qualified.

On the contrary, a man's being an inhabitant of a particular city or town, does not give him the least title to the immunities peculiar to any other city or town. It would be very absurd for him to insist that because he had a right to vote for charter-officers in New-York, therefore he has a right to vote for charter-officers in Albany ! The reason is, they are independent on each other. But if voting for charter-officers were a right attached to citizenship at large, then he could claim the right in any city within the state—and he would vote in Albany, not because he had voted in New-York, but because he is a member of the *state* which includes them both.

The very same principle pervades the church of God. Were it not *one*, no man could claim privilege or exercise office, out of the particular church to which he belongs. A minister is no minister out of his own pulpit and his own charge. It would be just as proper for an alderman of New-York to issue writs in Albany, as for a minister of a congregation in New-York to offer to

preach in Albany. The effect would be, that a minister must have a new commission, that is, a new ordination, for every new church he should preach in.

We know that no church under heaven is able to carry this principle out into practice. There is but one of two ways to avoid the embarrassment:

Either, communion between the members and ministers of different congregations, is the result of an agreement between them; or the independent churches themselves do act upon the principle which they deny, the catholic unity of the church.

If the latter, our point is gained. If the former, then the communion of churches is derived, not from their communion with our Lord Jesus Christ, nor from his authority; but from a *human compact*; and thus far we have no *Christian* privileges at all.

If, to elude the force of this conclusion, it be said, that Christ has warranted and required his churches, although independent of each other, to keep up their fellowship in his name—we reply, that this is a contradiction. Because the very fact of his uniting them in such fellowship constitutes them, to its whole extent, but *one body*, the members of which cannot possibly be independent on each other. The issue is, that all Christian and ministerial communion originates in the visible

unity of the catholic church ; and that there is no explaining its reason, nor preserving its existence, without admitting, in some shape or other, that the church of God is *one*—this is our *first* result.

2. From the relation in which the children of believing parents stand in the church of God there result mutual rights and duties.

1st. Such children have a *right*, even in their infancy, to a solemn acknowledgment of their membership by the administration of baptism—they have a right to the individual and collective prayers of Christians ; that is to be remembered before the throne of grace by Christians in their retired devotion, and in the public worship of the church.—They have a right, during their tender age, to her instruction, her protection, and her salutary control. It would be strange, indeed, if little children, who were so graciously noticed by her king and her God, should have no claim upon her parental affection. They are her hope ; they are the seed from which she is to look for “ trees of righteousness ; the planting of Jehovah that he may be glorified.” And, as such, they are intitled to her patient and assiduous culture.

This is the birth-right of the children of those who name the name of the Lord Jesus. We had it from our fathers. “ They trusted in God ; they trusted in him and they were not confounded.” He was their God ; and he was our God also, be-

cause he was the God of their seed. Thus “ the lines fell unto us in pleasant places ; yea we had a goodly heritage.” Owning the God of our fathers, we call upon him as the God of our seed ; and the inheritance which we derived from them we transmit to our sons and our daughters, that they may hand it down to their children, and their children to another generation. Our giddy youth undervalue this privilege ; our profane youth laugh at it. In doing so they “ observe lying vanities, and forsake their own mercies.” Such as have come to their right mind, and have learned to sit at the feet of Jesus, will say, with heartfelt emotion, in the words of Dr. Watts :

“ Lord, I ascribe it to thy grace ;  
And not to chance, as others do ;  
That I was born of Christian race,  
And not a heathen or a Jew.”

2d. There are *duties* corresponding with these privileges. Youth born in the Christian church, acknowledged as her children, and put under her care, can never shake off certain tender and solemn obligations.

They are bound to revere her authority, and to promote her happiness. The very law of nature intitles her to this. A young man who should evince, from the time he was capable of action, a studied contempt for the magistrates, laws, institutions and welfare of his country, would be held

to have renounced all virtuous principle ; and, if he should elude the tribunals of justice, could not escape the punishment of public detestation. But why ? Is it because God has entrusted his church with his living oracles ; and dignified her with his gracious presence, that her counsels are beneath regard, and her control a matter of scorn ? Is it because she has done more to prepare her children for usefulness, for comfort, and for glory, than mere civil society ever did, or ever can do, that she has forfeited their esteem, does not deserve a hearing when she exhorts or remonstrates, and shall have her most friendly and faithful services repaid with indifference or disdain ? And shall behaviour which, in every other community would seal a man up for infamy, be applauded as spirited and magnanimous in the church of God ? Let not the unworthy notion find a place among our young people ; let them feel their obligation to requite, with kindness, the care which watched over their early days ; and to respect the counsels and institutions whose tendency is not to debase, but to ennoble them ; not to embitter their enjoyments, but to ensure their peace ; not to lead them into harm, but to save them from ruin here, and to crown them with external blessedness in the world to come.

Let them reflect, moreover, that they are bound to own their relation to the church of God, by

professing the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; showing forth his death in the communion of the holy supper, and walking in all his ordinances and commandments blameless.

It is to be feared that even such of them as are of sober deportment; as carefully avoid every thing rude or unbecoming toward Christianity and Christians; as would turn with horror from open infidelity, do yet, for the most part, labour under the evil of an erroneous conscience on this subject; and seduce themselves into a false and hurtful tranquillity. They seem to think that professing or not professing to be followers of Christ is a matter of mere choice—that the omission contracts no guilt, while it enlarges the sphere of their indulgences, and exempts them from the necessity of that tender and circumspect walk which belongs to a real Christian.

This is all wrong—radically wrong. The very mildest construction which it can bear, amounts to a confession of their being “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise”—of their anxiety to decline something which the service of God imposes, or of retaining something which it abjures—and is not *this* a most alarming thought? Do they expect to get to heaven with tempers and habits which are incompatible with devotedness to God upon earth? If they do not choose to “name the name

of Christ,” is it not because they do not choose to “depart from iniquity?” Let them not cherish any delusive hope. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* And if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his! O let them weigh well the alternative! If they do, what possible reason can they assign for refusing to honour him before men? Nay, this cannot be admitted: for if *with the heart they believe unto righteousness, with the mouth they will also make confession unto salvation.* And Christ has told them that if they will *not confess him before men*, they have nothing to expect but that *he will not confess them before his Father who is in heaven.* By not confessing the Lord Jesus, they declare themselves willing to be accounted unbelievers. Are they prepared for the consequences?

Furthermore. It arises out of the very nature of the case, that if the most High God condescends to offer eternal life, in his dear Son, to sinners whom he might justly shut up under an irreversible sentence of death, they cannot slight his offer without the most flagrant ingratitude, and the most aggravated guilt. His *commandment* to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, as his “unspeakable gift,” is peremptory: and disobedience to it an act of direct rebellion. To say then, “I will not profess the name of Christ,” is to say, “I will neither submit to the authority of God, nor accept the gift

of his grace.” With the very same propriety might you say, I will pay no respect to the moral law—I will go after strange Gods: I will bow to graven images—I will swear and blaspheme—I will not keep holy the Sabbath day—I will not obey my parents—I will murder, and commit adultery, and steal, and lie, and covet; I will do nothing which God has required; and I will do every thing which he has forbidden! Does the youthful reader start and tremble? Why? The same God who has said, Thou shalt not kill—thou shalt not commit adultery—thou shalt not steal—thou shalt not lie; has said, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*. It is the same authority which enjoins, and the same rebellion which resists. Thou canst not, therefore, decline that “good confession, but at the peril of putting away from thee the words of eternal life.” And thou knowest what his word has decided.—*If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be ————.\**

There is something more. Many young persons imagine that they are not members of the church, until, upon a personal profession of their faith, they join it in the communion of the holy supper. This is a great mistake. The children of Christian parents are *born* members of the church. Their baptism is founded upon their membership; and not, as some people suppose, their membership

\* 1 Cor. xvi. 22.



upon their baptism. On the same principle, when they arrive at the years of discretion, they may, in taking upon them their baptismal engagements, by a becoming profession of the Lord Jesus, *demand* a seat at his table, as their *privilege* which the church cannot deny. Their allegiance to him as their Redeemer, their King, and their God, is inseparable from their birth-right. The question, then, with them, when they reach that period of maturity which qualifies them to judge for themselves, is, *not* whether they shall contract or avoid an allegiance which has hitherto had no claims upon them : but whether they shall acknowledge or *renounce* an allegiance under which they drew their first breath ? Whether they shall disown the prince of life, and wave their interest in his church ? Whether they shall disclaim the God of their fathers ; forswear their consecration to his service—take back the vows which were made over them and for them when they were presented to him in his sanctuary ; his blessed name called upon them ; and the symbol of that “ blood which cleanseth from all sin,” applied to them ? Not whether they shall be simple *unbelievers*, but whether they shall display their unbelief in the form of *apostasy* ? *That* is the question : and an awful one it is. As they value their eternal life, let them consider, that every hour of their continuance in their neglect of Christ is an hour of contempt for his salvation,

and of slander on his cross. How shall their hearts endure or their hands be made strong, when he shall come to reckon with them for their *treading him under foot, and counting the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing?* Reckon with them he will, and precisely for their *not owning him* ; for they cannot, no, they cannot shake off their obligations to own him ; although in the attempt they may destroy themselves for ever.

“ According to this representation,” I shall be told, “ the condition of many of our youth is very deplorable. It is their *duty*, you say, to profess the name of Christ, and to seal their profession at the sacramental table. This they cannot do : for they are conscious that they do not possess those principles and dispositions which are requisite to render such a profession honest. What course shall they steer ? If they do not profess Christ, they live in rebellion against God : if they do, they mock him with a lie. Which side of the alternative shall they embrace ? Continue among the profane, and be consistently wicked ? or withdraw from them in appearance, and play the hypocrite ? ”

The case is, indeed, very deplorable. Destruction is on either hand. For the UNBELIEVING *shall have their part in the lake of fire,\** and the HYPO-

\* Rev. xxi. 8.

CRITE'S *hope shall perish*.\* God forbid that we should encourage either a false profession, or a refusal to make one. The duty is to embrace *neither* side of the alternative. Not to continue with the profane, and not to act the hypocrite; but to receive the Lord Jesus Christ in truth, and to walk in him. "I cannot do it," replies one: and one, it may be, not without moments of serious and tender emotion upon this very point: "I *cannot* do it." My soul bleeds for thee, thou unhappy! But it *must* be done, or thou art lost for ever. Yet what is the amount of that expression: in the mouth of some a flaunting excuse, and of others a bitter complaint—I cannot? Is the inability to believe in Christ different from an inability to perform any other duty? Is there any harder necessity of calling the God of Truth a LIAR, in *not believing the record which he hath given of his SON*, than of committing any other sin? The inability created, the necessity imposed, by the ENMITY of the carnal mind against God?† It is the inability of wickedness, and nothing else. Instead of being an apology, it is itself the *essential* crime, and can never become its own vindication.

But it is even so. The evil *does* lie too deep for the reach of human remedies. Yet a remedy there is, and an effectual one. It is here—"I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be

\* Job viii. 1.

† Rom. viii. 7.

*clean ; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A NEW HEART also will I GIVE you, and a NEW SPIRIT will I PUT within you : And I will TAKE AWAY the STONY HEART out of your flesh ; and I will GIVE you an HEART OF FLESH. And I will PUT MY SPIRIT WITHIN YOU, and CAUSE you to walk in my statutes ; and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.\** Try *this* expedient : Go, with thy “filthiness” and thine “idols :” Go, with thy “stony heart” and thy perverse spirit, which are thy real inability, to God upon the *throne of grace* ; spread out before him his “exceeding great and precious promise,” importune him as the hearer of prayer, in the name of JESUS, for the accomplishment of it to thyself—wait for his mercy : it is worth waiting for—and remember his word ; *Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be GRACIOUS UNTO YOU ; and therefore will he be exalted that he MAY HAVE MERCY upon you : for the Lord is a God of judgment ; blessed are all they that wait for him.†*

The *rights and duties* of the children of believing parents, arising out of their relation to the church, is only part of our second result, as they are mutual, let us now turn the question and view it in its relation to the rights and *duties* of the *Christian church toward such children*.

A right to provide for the proper education of their youth, has always been claimed, and exer-

\* Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.

† Is. xxx. 18.

cised in some form or other, by every civilized community. It is, indeed, inherent in the very nature of human society; as it springs out of that great, universal, and essential principle of man—self-preservation. The risen generation, is, for the most part, fixed. Their habits are formed, their characters settled, and what is to be expected from them may be ascertained with sufficient exactness for the principal purposes of life. Not so with the rising race. No sagacity can foretell what characters shall be developed, or what parts performed, by these boys and girls who throng our streets, and sport in our fields. In their tender breasts are concealed the germs, in their little hands are lodged the weapons, of a nation's overthrow or glory. Would it not, then, be madness; would it not be a sort of political suicide, for the commonwealth to be unconcerned what direction their infant powers shall take; or into what habits their budding affections shall ripen? Or will it be disputed, that the civil authority has a *right* to take care, by a paternal interference, on behalf of the children, that the next generation shall not prostrate in an hour, whatever has been consecrated to truth, to virtue, and to happiness, by the generations that are past?

If this is the common privilege of human nature, on what principle shall it be denied to the church of God? Spiritual in her character, furnished with

every light to guide the understanding; and every precept to mould the heart—possessing whatever is fearful to deter from sin, and whatever is sweet and alluring to win to God and holiness, how is it possible that she can have no *right* to bring these her advantages to bear upon the youth committed to her trust? Why were they thus committed? How shall she deserve the name of the spouse of Christ, if she endeavour not to bring up her own children in his “nurture and admonition?” Admitting the children of believing parents to be her members, the right to instruct and watch over them, is a matter of course. For it is a solecism and an absurdity to talk of a society which has no authority over its own members. And when we establish the *right*, we establish also the *duty*. The power is given to be employed. It is a talent for which the master will demand an account. If he has authorized his church to take charge of the children within her pale, she is responsible for the manner in which she acquits herself of the trust. How is this to be done?

1st. All baptized children, (whom by their baptism she acknowledges to be a part of her care,) are to be instructed by her authority, and under her eye.

There is a domestic training which it is her business to see that parents give their children. But she has an interest in these children altoge-

ther her own. Her ministers, or official catechists, are, in her name, to instill into them, the principles of the Christian religion, *over and above their tuition at home*; and whether their parents be faithful to them or not. A child is not to be turned off, and left a prey to destruction, because its parents do not shrink from the crime of “blood-guiltiness,” even guiltiness of the blood of their own offspring. Means are, therefore, to be used, that *all* the children of a congregation attend *public* instruction in the doctrines and duties of religion, as an *ordinance of Christ*; and to have the sense of their subjection to his ordinances incorporated with their earliest habits of thinking. No church can neglect this care without suffering: no church has ever fostered it without abundant recompense. The most intelligent, sober, staid, active Christians, are usually those who have grown up under the operation of this gentle but efficient discipline.

2d. The church is to inspect the *conduct* of her youth.

I do not mean that she is to encourage hawkers of scandal, nor to entertain legions of spies, for their benefit. Not that she is to put on that dismal visage which petrifies the juvenile heart; nor to indulge that morose inquisition which arraigns, as a crime, every burst of juvenile cheerfulness. It is as much a part of God’s *natural* constitution that youth should be sprightly, as that age should

be grave. To reduce to one size and one quality, all the decencies of life in all its periods, is the attribute of zeal which never discriminates, of severity which never learns, or of Pharisaism which finds a righteousness in reprobating enjoyments which it cannot share.

But, after every proper allowance and precaution, there is left a large field of juvenile conduct for the eye of the church to explore. Both in affirming the principles of rectitude, and in resisting the principles of evil, she may and she ought to do much for her youth.

If a child be exemplary in filial or fraternal affection ; pure in behaviour among others ; diligent in learning the precious truths of revelation ; reverential towards the ordinances of public and private worship ; fearful of sinning against God ; it is no small encouragement to have these excellencies observed, cherished, and honoured, by those who bear rule in the church. Timidity subsides ; bashfulness is attempered into modesty ; the ductile inclination grows into consistent purpose ; and thus “ little ones ” are brought to Jesus Christ, and prepared for occupying, in due season, the places of those whose gray hairs announce the approach of that hour in which they are to be numbered with them who have died in faith.

On the other hand, can any reflecting person doubt, that the seasonable interposition of the



church of God, might save many a youth from falling a victim to his own depravity, or to the depravity of others? Why should a doubt be entertained on the subject? Is the experiment fairly tried? Are the churches in the habit of throwing themselves in between ruin and the youth who have not openly professed religion? Do parents, on the failure of domestic admonition, *ever* resort to this remedy? Ought they not to do it? Why should a tender and solemn remonstrance, in the name of the living God, the Creator and the Judge of all, be without its influence in recovering an unpractised sinner from the error of the wicked? Why should not an *authoritative* expostulation, on the part of the church of God, brought home to individual feeling, have some effect, as a rational means, in prevailing with the young to consider their obligation to recognize the vows made over them in their baptism? There are more troublesome consciences on this point, among our youth, than we, perhaps, imagine. Why should they not be told, that continuance in carelessness, or abandonment to iniquity, will compel the church of God to disown them, and to rank them with those concerning whom she has no promises to plead? Let it not be said that “the state of religious society forbids such an interference—that parents and children would spurn at it as an encroachment upon their liberty—and that instead of

gaining our youth, it would drive them, at once, into the camp of the profane ;”—at least, let not these things be said without *facts* to support them. They are the suggestions of fear, unsanctioned by experience. No doubt, in the decayed state of Christian order, much prudence is necessary for its revival : but the necessity of prudence cannot excuse inaction. It is very possible, also, that some young saints would “kick against the pricks.” But the same objection lies against the faithful preaching of the word ; and against the impartial use of discipline toward professors. There are weighty reasons why a judicious extension of church authority to baptised youth in general, would not be so fruitless and despicable as some suppose.

*First,* The mere power of *opinion* which it would employ, could not be easily resisted. It is to be remembered, that a very little quantity of opinion goes a great way with all minds which have not yet acquired self-stability ; and *such* opinion as the Christian church can at all times command, no man living *can* disregard with impunity.

*Secondly,* In many instances, this interference would combine with domestic precept and example ; and how far their united forces would go, nothing but the event is entitled to pronounce.

*Thirdly,* Dissolute as the world is, and disposed as multitudes are to scoff at every thing which

bears the image and superscription of Jesus Christ, it will be no recommendation even with thoughtless people, that a young person fled away from the voice of kindly instruction ; much less that he was thrust out on account of his vices. Some there are, who, to serve the present hour, would applaud his spirit ; and, on the first disagreement, would upbraid him with his disgrace. It is not in human nature to stand easily under an excommunication of *any sort*. Exclusion, for faults, from any decent society, is, and ever will be, a stigma. Whoever disbelieves it, has only to try.

*Fourthly*, The providence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and his control over the hearts and affairs of men, are especially to be regarded. Perhaps no instance can be shown of contempt upon the discipline of his house not being followed, sooner or later, with most disastrous consequences to the offender. He has promised to own, support, and vindicate it, as solemnly as he ever promised to bless the gospel of his grace. If more stress were laid upon *his* agency in rendering effectual his own institutions ; we should both discharge our duty more exactly, and see it crowned with greater success. Let the churches *begin* to look after their youth—let them commit their efforts to their master's faithfulness. It will be time enough to complain when he “leaves himself without a witness.”

3d. There is a particular class of children to whom the church owes a duty which she too frequently neglects—I mean *orphans*.

Godly parents die; and their little ones are scattered. Scattered, indeed, they often must be, but forgotten they ought not to be. They are often permitted to be placed in families where they can reap no religious benefit. All responsibility for them seems to be thrown away, and given to the winds with the last breath of their father or mother. Thus abandoned by the church, which ought to be to them in God's stead, and when their father and their mother forsake them, to take them up, they are in danger of being lost in this world, and in the world to come. I speak immediately of those who have no private dependence but the bounty of strangers. Guilt in this matter, there certainly is, and the sooner we arise to shake it out of our skirts, the better will it be for ourselves, and our *own* children.

Beside the conclusions which we have drawn from the general Constitution of the Church of God, relative to Christian communion, and the rights and duties mutually subsisting between the Church and her infant members, there is a

*Third* result relative to her officers; especially those who labour in the word and doctrine. It is this: *They are PRIMARILY the property of the CHURCH CATHOLIC; and only in a SECONDARY and*

SUBORDINATE *sense, the property of a particular congregation.*

Throughout the christianized world, it has always been customary, in a greater or less degree, to remove ministers of the gospel from one pastoral charge to another, or to liberate them from pastoral ties altogether, that they might promote, in a different form, the interests of the Christian cause. For very obvious reasons, these removals happen most frequently to men of talents. Nor is there a single thing which creates more uneasiness and heart-burning. It is perfectly natural. For neither individuals nor societies are fond of parting with what they consider a treasure. Able, faithful, discreet ministers, are a rare blessing; and it would say little for the understanding, and less for the religion, of any Church which should lightly relinquish it. We must further admit, that a wanton disruption of the pastoral ties is foolish, unwarrantable, and extensively pernicious.

Still the question of its propriety must be tried, not by examples of its abuse, nor by its unpopularity, but by the *principles* on which it is founded. This cannot be done, without examining the nature of the claim which a particular congregation has to her minister.

The pastoral connexion is commonly compared to a matrimonial connexion; which, being for

life, the popular inference is, that the pastoral connexion also is for life.

This proves nothing, except the facility with which most people impose upon themselves by sounds and similes. A simile is no argument. And the simile of a man and his wife, to denote a pastor and his congregation, is peculiarly unhappy. If it is to prescribe the duration of their union, it must also regulate the discharge of their duties. Now, as married persons must confine their matrimonial intercourse to themselves, not allowing a participation in it to any other, this simile, working up the ministerial relation into a sort of pastoral matrimony, would render it absolutely unlawful in a minister to hold religious communion with any other people, and in his people to hold religious communion with any other minister. Nor, if a minister's just maintenance should grow inconvenient to a people's finances, or he should fall into disfavour, even without any charge of misconduct, would they think it sound reasoning to turn upon them with their own simile, and say, "A minister and his people are as husband and wife. A wife takes her husband for better for worse ; so did you take your minister ; and as you took him you must keep him. The plea of poverty or disgust is of no avail ; a woman is not to quit her husband whenever she thinks that he spends too much of the fortune she brought him ; nor is

she to run away from him merely because she does not like him any longer, or has a fancy for some one else. This is no better than downright adultery : and such is the behaviour of a congregation, who has grown tired of a minister, and wishes to get rid of him." It would be very hard to persuade a congregation that this is correct reasoning ; and yet it is exactly such reasoning as we hear every day against the removal of a minister, grounded on the notion of something like a marriage covenant between him and his charge. The reasoning proceeds from feelings pretty general among men, prompting them to prefer a bargain which shall be all on one side, and that side their own. They wish to have the whole comfort without risk of privations on the one hand, or of irksome burdens on the other. It is perfectly equitable in their eyes, that a minister should leave them to better *their* situation ; but to leave them in order to better *his own*, is almost, if not altogether, an adulterous desertion ; and even if it be to forward upon a larger scale, and with more efficacy, the advantage of Christ's kingdom, his authoritative removal is little, if at all, less than robbery !

But let us be just. They are not the people only who adopt this preposterous reasoning. Ministers have too frequently fallen into the same error ; and, in some instances, they have exactly

reversed the popular conclusions; stating it as good and wholesome doctrine, that a minister should have it in his power to retain his cure as long as he pleases; and to resign it when he pleases; but should by no means be subject to removal when the people wish it. Thus, in their turn, making the bargain all on their own side. This is paltry work : It is, on both sides, a calculation fit only for sharpers. In so far as it arises from honest opinion, it springs out of a radical mistake, which is to be rectified by considering how the unity of the visible church affects ministerial character and labours.

The mistake is this: that “a minister and his congregation possess each other, if I may so word it, in a mutual fee simple—that they have an exclusive and absolute right to each other;” whereas no such possession, no such right does, or can, exist.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, when he “ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, gave gifts unto men. And he gave some,” (i. e. some whom he gave were,) “apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Eph. iv.

Here ministers of the gospel are said to be Christ’s ascension-gift to his church! But what



church ? Certainly not a particular congregation, for the gift includes ministers who never *could be* confined to so limited a charge. No one particular congregation ; no, nor any section of Christians, though containing *many* congregations, could appropriate to themselves the labours of an apostle, or an evangelist. These were, beyond all contradiction, officers of the church catholic, or of the church visible. But it is to the same church that Christ has given the *ordinary* ministry, “pastors and teachers.” They are included in one and the same gift. Therefore, a minister belongs primarily and immediately to the church catholic ; and only *mediately*, that is, through the medium of the church catholic, is assigned to a particular congregation. It is, of course, *her* province and duty to determine how, and where, he shall be employed. The only rule of judgment is, *the greatest amount of benefit which may accrue from his services to the interests of the Redeemer’s kingdom.* The determination of this point must be confided to such a portion of the church catholic, assembled in judicatory, (since it is impossible for the whole to meet,) as shall secure, according to human probabilities, a wise and impartial decision. To lodge such a power in the hands of a particular congregation, would be manifestly improper ;

for it would not only make one set of men the judges in their own case, and in their neighbour's too, but would subject the great interests of the church of God to the control of persons unfurnished with sufficient information, often impassioned, always prepossessed ; and, therefore, incapable of "judging righteous judgment." Mistakes, and improprieties will, no doubt, occur, be the power where it may : because perfection is to be found no where. Yet, when a question is to be tried before a court composed of representatives from several particular churches, having much more ability, and better opportunities of informing themselves, than the mass of any congregation can have : being also free from that selfish bias to which the best minds and hearts are liable from calculations directly affecting themselves, it is in as fair a way of being decided well, as the imperfection of man admits. When such a court, then, fixes the pastoral relation between a minister and a congregation, it does not surrender him up absolutely to them ; nor wed them to each other for life. It places him there, because it believes that his labours there will be, upon the whole, most useful to the church at large. And the principle which regulates the formation, must also regulate the continuance, of his pastoral relations. He is to remain so long as the church of God shall gain more by his continuance than by his removal, and

no longer. Whenever it shall clearly appear that his labours may be turned to better account by his removal than by his continuance, he ought to be removed: not, however, at his own discretion, or the discretion of his people, but upon the same careful examination by the church representative, as preceded his first settlement. We repeat, that it would be unreasonable and unrighteous, to let an individual or a congregation possess the power of sacrificing to their narrow gratification, the interest of the Christian community. Ministers, then, must be in that situation which shall render their labours of the greatest utility. They are ordinarily joined to parochial charges; because this, upon the whole, is the best practical system; and not because their charges have an exclusive property in them. The claims of the church at large, always supersede the claims of any particular part; so that whatever be the attachment of a people to their minister, or of a minister to his people, when the *general* claim is set up, their particular feelings must give way; and that upon this self-evident truth, that the whole is greater than a part. Pursuing the same reasoning, we perceive, that whether a minister shall have a congregation or not, is a question of secondary importance; and is to be answered by a prudent consideration of the previous question,—whether he

is likely to be more extensively useful with or without a congregation?

That removals from charges where men are beloved and useful, ought not to be rash; ought not to take place, without the most solid reasons; ought, in all cases, to be managed with circumspection and with dignity; that the very uneasiness excited by such removals, ought to be weighed in the balances among the strong reasons against them are dictates of common sense and equity; and no wise judicatory will ever disregard them. But that the *principle* is sound—that a minister may *lawfully* be removed from one charge to another; or from one species of labour to another, cannot be controverted, without tearing up the foundations of the whole church of God.

Finally. A very important result from the foregoing discussions concerning the nature of the church is, that *no form of church government can be scriptural, which is not adapted to this broad and master-principle, that the visible church is ONE.*

Her external organization must be such as shall show her to the world, as *a living body*, according to the apostle's figure. Eph. iv. 12. 16. She must, therefore, have principles, and means, of common action. The whole must control the parts—She must have a power of self-preservation, which includes,

1. A power of commanding the agency of any particular member :
2. A power of combining the agency of *all* her members :
3. A power of providing for her nourishment and health :
4. A power of expelling impurities and corruptions.

These things are essential to her organization according to the description given of her in the word of God. We may have occasion to illustrate them more particularly hereafter ; we close, at present, with one remark—that a number of particular churches not united in mutual dependence, and not furnished with a principle of living efficiency in one common system, so as to bring the strength of the whole to operate in any part, or through all the parts collectively, as occasion may require, no more resemble the visible church of Christ, than the limbs of the human body, dissevered, and not “fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part,” resemble a healthy man.

# CHURCH OF GOD.

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No. VIII.

## *Officers.*

A COMMUNITY so large, and yet so compact ; formed, preserved, and perpetuated with so much care ; directed to so high an end ; and furnished with principles of such universal application, as we have proved the church of God to be, requires a suitable regimen. God is the God of order : no order can be kept up any where without government ; and no government can exist without officers to administer it. Our next inquiry, therefore, relates to the *officers* whom Christ hath appointed.

In the Apostolical church were the following :  
viz.

1. APOSTLES,—1 Cor xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11.
2. PROPHETS,—Rom. xii. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 28  
Eph. iv. 11.
3. EVANGELISTS,—Eph. iv. 11.

4. PASTORS and TEACHERS,—*Ibid.* Acts xiii. 1  
 who ruled,——  
 who also laboured in word and } 1 Tim. v. 17.  
 doctrine,——
5. ELDERS, who “ruled” *without* “labouring  
 in word and doctrine,”——*Ibid.*
6. DEACONS,——Acts vi. 1—6. 1. Tim. iii. 8.

It is evident that the great object of all these offices was the religious education of the world. We mean that they were intended to instruct mankind in the knowledge of divine truth ; to inspire them with pure principles and spiritual affections ; to form their individual and social habits to practical holiness, and moral order ; in one word, to render them “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.”

It is also evident, that some of these offices were only temporary. Which of them were designed to be permanent, and in what form, is an inquiry which we must postpone till we shall have settled a previous question.

It has been, and still is, a received belief among almost all who profess Christianity, that the Redeemer has instituted a regular ministry to be perpetuated in an order of men specially set apart and commissioned by his authority, for the purpose of inculcating the doctrines and duties of Christianity ; and that no man may lawfully en-

ter upon its functions without an official warrant from them who are themselves already in office.

Others contend that this whole system is of human origin; is founded either in ignorance or in fraud; and militates directly against the nature and privileges of the Christian church.

Others again, attempt a middle course; allowing the general principle of a ministry, but leaving the application of it at large; and conceiving the exercise of gifts with the approbation of the *church*, that is, a number of professing Christians met together for public worship, to be a valid and sufficient call.

To clear up this matter, let us consider,

1. What the scriptures have determined concerning the *fact* in dispute: and

2. What are the uses, qualifications, and mode of preserving, a standing ministry.

1. As to the *fact*. These things are worthy of regard.

- 1st. It is undeniable, that from the time God set up his church in her organized form, (and even before,) until the Christian dispensation, there was an order of men consecrated, by his own appointment, to the exclusive work of directing her worship, and presiding over her interests: inso-much that no man, but one of themselves, not even a crowned head, might meddle with their functions; nor undertake, in any way, to be a



public teacher of religion, without an immediate call from heaven attested by miraculous evidence.

2d. The ancient prophets, “who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” foretold that the same principle should be acted upon in the days of the Messiah. Thus in Isa. lxvi. 21. *I will also take of them for PRIESTS and for LEVITES, saith JEHOVAH*—and Dan. xiii. 3. *They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.* The word rendered “wise,” signifies teachers,” whose business, and, according as they are blessed of God, whose happiness, it is to turn men unto righteousness. Our Lord himself has used the term in the same sense, as indeed it was a very common signification among the people of the East: *Behold I send you prophets, and WISE MEN, and scribes.* Matt. xxiii. 34. The force of the argument is, that these predictions contemplate events which were to take place in the Christian economy; and without which they could not be fulfilled. The passage from Isaiah refers to the “new heavens and the new earth” which the Lord should make: consequently, to New Testament times: And not only so, but to their most illustrious period—the restoration of the Jews, and the glory of the latter day. “Priests and Levites,” to perform services similar to those under the old economy, there can be none; because the end of

those services being accomplished, their further continuance is impossible ; and the economy itself has vanished away. Yet the prediction and the promise must be fulfilled : and can mean nothing less than this, that as the Priests and the Levites were appointed of God to minister in holy things during the former dispensation, and in a manner suited to its peculiar character ; so there should be appointed of God, under the new dispensation, a ministry corresponding to its peculiar character ; which ministry should flourish even in those days when the most copious effusions of the divine Spirit should seem to render it the least necessary. And this is a full answer to the objection brought from the promise that *all Zion's children shall be taught of God—and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, "know the Lord :"* for *they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.* Jer. xxxi. 34.

We say that an objection drawn from such passages against a Christian ministry, as regular and exclusive as the ministry of the Levitical Law, is of no weight :

For in the *first*, place, they are not more full and explicit than those passages which promise such a ministry : and as both are true, no interpretation can be admitted of one, which shall contradict the other.

*Secondly*, If the objection is well-founded, it sweeps away not only a standing ministry ; but all religious instruction in every shape : prohibiting even parents to “ bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ;” and putting under a bushel the very light of the “ gifted brethren”—which would be rather lamentable.

*Thirdly*, There is the most perfect consistency between a great diffusion of religious light, and great use of religious teachers. We find, by experience, that the most enlightened Christians do most honour and value an enlightened ministry. The ignorant, and the vain are most ready to suppose that they need no instruction. *Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser ; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning*, (Prov. ix. 9.) *But, seest thou a man wise in his own conceit ? there is more hope of a fool than of him*, (xxvi. 12.) The “ principalities and powers in heavenly places,” were no novices in the knowledge of God. But when they wished to obtain still larger views of his “ manifold wisdom.” they did not blush to take a lesson from the lips of Paul, (Eph. iii. 10.)

There is no difficulty in the appellation of “ Priests and Levites ;” seeing it was customary with the prophets to speak of New Testament blessings in Old Testament style ; and not practicable for them to use any other, and be sufficiently intelligible.

3d. Our Lord Jesus Christ delivered their commission to his apostles in terms which necessarily imply a perpetual and regularly successive ministry. *Go ye, and TEACH ALL NATIONS, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and, lo, I am with you ALWAYS, even unto the END OF THE WORLD, Matt. xxviii. 19.*

That this command and promise though immediately addressed, were not limited, to the apostles, is so obvious as almost to shame an argument. But since we are sometimes required to prove that two and two make four, we remark,

*First.* That as the command is to teach all nations ; it must spread as far, and last as long as nations shall be found. It is therefore a command to make the Christian religion universal ; and to perpetuate it from generation to generation.

*Secondly.* That as the Apostles were shortly to “put off their tabernacles,” the command could not possibly be fulfilled by them. It runs parallel with the existence of nations. It must, therefore, be executed by others, in every age, who are to carry on the work which the apostles begun ; and who, by the very terms of the commandment, are identified with them in the general spirit of their commission, which is, to preach the doctrines,

enforce the precepts, and administer the ordinances, of Jesus Christ.

*Thirdly.* That the promise, “I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” cannot without palpable absurdity, be restricted to the persons, nor to the days of the Apostles. Closely rendered it is, “I am with you always, even until the *consummation of the age*,” i. e. “dispensation.”\* But what age? what dispensation? Either the Jewish, or the Christian.

Not the Jewish, certainly. It would be very strange if the grace of the Redeemer’s promise should abide with his apostles till the end of the old dispensation, and run out exactly at the moment when it was wanted for the new one. The “world,” therefore, is that “world” which Paul calls “the world to come,” (Heb. ii. 5.) i. e. the Christian dispensation. “I have just introduced it,” says the master, “and I will be with you to the close of it.” The promise, then, as well as the precept, reaches to the end of time; and, like the precept, embraces a successive ministry to whom our Lord Jesus has engaged the continuance of his gracious presence.

4th. The Apostles themselves acted upon the principle of a perpetual ministry. “They ordained Presbyters in every church,” (Acts xiv. 23.) Paul has left, in his epistles to Timothy and Titus,

\* Ἔως της συντελειας του αιωνος.

as a part of the rule of faith and practice, particular directions for the choice of Bishops or Presbyters and deacons: And in his epistle to the Hebrews, (ch. xiii. 17.) he charges these widely scattered disciples, to obey their spiritual rulers, under this precise idea that they *watch*, says he, *for your souls as they that must give account.*

5th. The New Testament abounds with predictions and warnings of *apostacy* in the ministers of religion; which of course, implies the *continuance* of a ministry.

6th. The book of Revelation expressly recognizes the diffusion of the Gospel, in times yet to come, by the instrumentality of a public ministry, (ch. xiv. 6.)

Since, therefore, the Head of the church instituted a regular ministry in his church thousands of years ago—since he directed his prophets to foretell its existence under the new dispensation—since he gave to his apostles a commission which necessarily supposes its perpetuity—since these apostles themselves acted upon that principle in erecting churches—since the rule of faith has given instructions to guide its application—since the prophetic spirit in the last of the apostles has uttered oracles which are founded upon it—no conclusion is more safe and irrefragable than this; that a regular, standing ministry is an essential constituent of the church of God.

This point settled, that our Lord Jesus Christ has instituted a ministry which is to be coeval with his church, we now proceed

2. To consider the uses, qualifications, and mode of preserving, a standing ministry.

1st. Its *uses*.

The common sense of mankind, in all ages and countries, has taught them, that no system of religion can be maintained and perpetuated, without an order of religious teachers. Search the world over, and you shall not find a nation, civilized or savage, without such an order. The truth or falsehood of the religious system has no immediate connexion with this argument. It is founded upon a principle which includes the cardinal secret of human improvement—the *division of labour*. In other words, that to ensure excellence in any occupation whatever, it must be confined to a particular class of men, and these men must be confined to it. Set ten individuals to work at ten different species of industry, so that every one shall be employed by turns upon all the ten; let other ten work at the very same things, but distribute them so as that each of the ten shall have his appropriate employment, never intermeddling with the other nine; and two effects will follow—*First*, The produce of each particular species of industry will be incomparably better; and, *Secondly*, The aggregate produce of all will be incomparably

greater, upon the second plan than upon the first. That is, the work performed in the ten branches of industry by ten men, each one being limited to a particular branch, will be incomparably superior in quality and quantity, to the work performed by the same number of hands labouring promiscuously in all the branches. Whoever disputes this position, has yet to learn the first letter in the alphabet of human experience. Apply this to the church of God. The religious cultivation of a people upon the principles of revelation, furnishes matter not only for a *separate* calling; but for a calling which requires *subdivision*.

The rules of faith and duty are comprised in a miscellaneous volume, the different parts of which are to be studied, compared, explained, enforced. This is not the work of a novice; of an occasional exhorter; of one who spends six days of the week in a secular employment; and comes forth on the sabbath to vent his babblings under the name of preaching. Talent, learning, and labour, have found the week short enough for the right preparation of a people's spiritual food, and the discharge of other ministerial functions. In proportion as intellect is strong, knowledge deep, and the habit of application vigorous, is a sense of the ministerial trust impressive and awful. Feebleness of mind, and the conceit of ignorance,



make it sit light upon the heart, and frustrate some of its noblest effects.

Were we not accustomed to absurdities, we should think it unaccountable, that, while the education of children is an exclusive occupation, the education and direction of children and men both, should ever be merely an incidental matter ; and be left to the chance-medley of a fugitive hour ! Had Christianity set out upon this maxim, she had never reached the age of one hundred years. Her divine head did not commit her, for a single day, to such irregular and incompetent guidance. Those things which, in later times, are the fruit of patient and painful investigation, were, at the beginning of her career, in the East, open to every eye and familiar to every mind. Yet her teachers were a separate order, as the very face of her history in the New Testament shows. If Timothy, who was an extraordinary officer, a native of those regions from which the scriptural allusions and illustrations are taken ; a disciple, too, of an inspired master, was enjoined to “ *give himself to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine ;*” if he was not to neglect, but to stir up the “ gift which was in him, which was given him by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery ”—If he was to meditate upon these things ; to give himself *wholly* to them ; that his *profiting* might appear to all ;” how can equal diligence and appli-

cation be dispensed with in others who have to encounter much greater difficulties without the same advantage? How dare men, not possessing the hundredth part of the information necessary to elucidate a single chapter of the Bible, which happens to contain matter beyond the simplest rudiments of Christianity, how do they *dare*, under such circumstances, to ascend the pulpit as expounders of “the oracles of the living God?” If “the priest’s lips must keep knowledge, because he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts,” how shall the crude and undisciplined mind “bring forth things new and old?” It is not possible; the constitution of God’s world forbids, that a man who is busied six days out of seven, in mechanical, commercial, or other secular toil, should have his intellect *trained* to the immensely important and comprehensive duty of instructing his fellow-men in the will of God, and the science of happiness. If the diffusion of religious light; if the formation of the moral habits of a community; if the prevention and suppression of error and vice; if the consolation of the afflicted; if the administration of ordinances designed of God as means of eternal life, do not demand an entire devotedness of those to whom they are intrusted, nothing can.

It is vain and foolish to dissemble facts. All sound exposition of the scriptures; i. e. all the

pure and steady light of truth which shines in the churches, has been the work of men thus devoted. The discourses of others are, for the most part, mere shreds pilfered from the webs woven by that industry, learning, and talent, which they affect to undervalue. That usurpation of the sacred office, termed *lay-preaching*, now grown so common, cannot fail, unless a miracle should invert the course of nature, to degrade, and if it become general, to destroy, the ministry of reconciliation. The enemy could desire nothing more noxious to Christianity, than gradually to expel all cultivated talent from her pulpits; and to throw her interests into the hands of men self-approved, and self-sent. There is, indeed, an apology, which, though insufficient, cannot be denied to have a foundation. Shrewd men, even in vulgar life, hear preachers, who, in the cant prase, have been *regularly bred*, utter very small discourse; confine their lucubrations to a few plain points, repeat the same things in the same way, and that none of the best, until every person of a tolerably retentive memory, can tell pretty nearly beforehand, what “entertainment” is to be expected. With such facts habitually before them, they learn to imagine that the ministry is no mighty affair; they say, and they say truly, that “they can preach as well themselves;” and the next step is *to try*. The people perceive no great superiority or inferiority:

and why should they maintain a man for giving them instruction of no better quality, than they can get for little or nothing? All this is natural; and more, it is reasonable. Why, indeed? Let us not pretend to dispute what the world knows to be true. Let us not shut our eyes upon our own disgrace, and the ruin of the Christian cause.

*Pudet hæc opprobria!* We have ample ground for humiliation. There are many, many “regularly bred” clergy, who are much fitter to make shoes, or buttons, or baskets, than to make sermons. No disrespect to any branch of mechanical industry; but every thing in its place. No men can be more out of place, than multitudes who are in the ministry. It was a sad mistake which caused them to stray into the pulpit. How has this happened? By what fatal perversion has the province of *instructing* mankind in things pertaining to God and to eternity, fallen so frequently into the hands of the ignorant and stupid? And why, when young men, neither stupid nor ignorant, enter upon it, does the progress of their ministry so little correspond with its original promise?

There are two prominent reasons.

(1.) The miserable provision for their temporal support.

When men consecrate themselves to the religious weal of a people, and do, by that act, forego the opportunities open to all others, of providing

for themselves and their families, a competent maintenance is the least remuneration which they have a right to claim. It is the dictate of common sense, common justice, and common humanity. It is also the express commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ. But, notwithstanding these considerations, the ministry is little better than a starving profession. Not one man in twenty, were he compelled to live upon the salary allowed by his congregation, could escape from beggary and rags. The certain effect is, on the one hand, to deter young men of respectable talents from the ministry altogether; and, on the other, to discourage, depress and finally to ruin those who are in it already.

That degree of talent which fits one, so far as intellectual endowments go, for a useful minister of the Gospel, is much rarer than many seem to imagine; and, humanly speaking, has its temporal prosperity in its own power. When other pursuits invite by the promise of not only a maintenance, but of gain, and even of opulence, it is idle, it is unreasonable, to hope that youth of talents, without fortune, whatever be their piety, will serve the church of God at the expense of devoting themselves to infallible penury, and all the wretchedness which belongs to it. They may desire, they may wish; and, in some instances, from that simplicity which never calculates or which flatters itself that

something favourable “will turn up,” they may venture: but in general, they must turn away with a sigh from the employment which, of all others, their hearts most long after. Let us not hear of self-denial, spiritual-mindedness, and a heroic indifference to worldly things, as characteristic of the true minister of Christ. Self-denial does not mean starving. The spirituality of the father will not stop the cravings of his children when they cry for food; nor is there any heroism in preferring tatters and a hovel to decent clothing and lodging, when they may be had. It is very convenient, no doubt, for men who are adding house to house, field to field, thousand to thousand, to harangue, in a religious style, on the necessity of a minister’s imitating his master, “who had not where to lay his head;” when the practical inference from all this is in favour of their own pockets. They are wonderfully concerned for spirituality and self-denial to be practised by their ministers; but as to their *own* share of these virtues; as to *their* parting with a pittance of *their* pelf to render him comfortable—why—that is another affair. It is one of the most wicked forms of hypocrisy to plead for the cultivation of a minister’s heavenly-mindedness, by way of an apology for cheating him out of his bread. The sin of the neglect complained of is not equally gross in all. In some it proceeds from thoughtlessness; in others from

incapacity to make a right estimate ; but in most, it is the fruit of downright covetousness. There has been, on this subject, an absurd squeamishness in those whom the Lord has authorized to “live by the gospel.” They have borne, and forborne ; they have submitted to every species of sacrifice rather than disoblige their people ; and their only reward has been an accumulation of injuries and cold-blooded contempt. It is time for them to claim their due in a modest, but manly tone ; and throw the fearful responsibility of expelling an enlightened ministry from the church upon those who are able, but not willing, to support it honourably. We say an “enlightened” ministry. For we have no conception that niggardly provision will soon strip her of every thing in the shape of a minister. You cannot place the pecuniary recompense so low, as that it shall not be an object for somebody. Fix your salaries at 50 dollars a-year, and you shall not want candidates. But then they will be *fifty-dollar-men*. All genius, all learning, all high character, all capacity for extensive usefulness, will be swept away ; and rudeness, ignorance, impudence, and vulgarity, will become the religious directors of the nation. The man is blind who does not see matters fast hastening to this issue in the United States.

In the mean time, such ministers as are better qualified for their stations, are not only decreasing

in proportion to the population, but with few exceptions, are prohibited from cultivating the powers which they possess. Remote from literary society; without libraries; without leisure to use what books they have; distracted with anxiety for their immediate subsistence; doomed to the plough or some other secular business, to keep themselves fed and clothed, their intellect becomes enfeebled; their acquisitions are dissipated; their ministry grows barren; their people indifferent; and the solid interests of Christianity are gradually, but effectually, undermined. Let the churches be warned. They have long slept on the edge of a precipice; the ground is caving in below them; and still they are not aware. Not a place of any importance is to be filled without the utmost difficulty. The search must be made from Dan to Beersheeba; often, very often, unsuccessfully; and when successful it is only enriching one church by the robbery of another. The population of our country is increasing with unexampled rapidity; very incompetent means are used to furnish an efficient ministry; and the people themselves are throwing the most fatal discouragement in the way. All denominations seem to be engaged in a practical conspiracy to starve Christianity out of the land. Let them tremble at their deeds; let their loins be loosed, and their knees smite to-



gether, at the bare possibility that they MAY SUCCEED.

But it is not the people only who are in fault ; for,

(2.) Much of the guilt of decayed Christianity lies at the doors of the ministers and judicatories of the church.

It is not *arguing* for the divine right of a stated ministry ; it is not boasting about the excellence of “ our church ;” it is not lamenting over the supineness of the public, that will cure the evil. It is the *procuring a ministry which shall render attendance upon their ministrations the interest of both the understanding and the heart.* Without this, every effort is vain : and this belongs to Christian judicatories. Let the world see and feel that there is an immense superiority of the regular over an irregular ministry, and there will be no more lay-preaching ; nor so much difficulty in getting a decent support. But it cannot be concealed, that little as congregations give, they often give to the uttermost farthing, “ for value received.” The mischief is, that the rule of abridgment becomes general, and the “ workman who needeth not to be ashamed,” must share the fate of him who is no workman at all. Ministers have themselves to blame for much of this evil. They have lowered the standard of ministerial qualifications. They usher into their high office men who have neither

head nor hands for any thing else. The apostolic directions, (in 1 Tim. 3.) are almost totally disregarded. Instead of “laying their hands suddenly on no man,” they have been too much in the habit of laying hands upon every one they can find—novice or no novice—fit to teach or unfit—able to govern or unable; all are accepted—nothing, or next to nothing, is refused. An absurd tenderness; a fear of hurting the feelings of a young man or of his friends; an infatuated haste to meet “the wants of the churches;” has poured fourth a stream of ignorance and incapacity, which now threatens to sweep away the harvest it was designed to water. In the degradation of the pulpit; in the butchery of the scriptures; in the defaced beauty, and tottering pillars of the Christian fabric, is to be seen the reward of timid indulgence and chimerical hope. If the ministry, as a *public order*, is to regain its credit, its own mismanagement must be radically cured.

# CHURCH OF GOD.

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No. IX.

## *Ministry.—Qualifications.*

THE *uses* of the Christian ministry, which was our first point, are, in several respects, so blended with its *qualifications*, which is our

2d point; that we cannot treat of the one without demonstrating the other.

It is the business of a Christian minister to instruct his people in what they are to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of them. His *first* qualification, therefore, is *piety*.

We are sinners. The characteristic principle in the religion of sinners, that, without which it is absolutely worthless to them, is SALVATION by a REDEEMER. Remove this—take away the incarnation and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, give us any thing as the ground of our hope but *redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace*, and there is no more Christianity. Now for men, calling them-

selves ministers of the Lord Jesus, to omit the cross where he *gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour* ; or to debase the doctrine of the cross so that it shall cease to be our exclusive trust for the pardon of our sin, is to lay the foundation of their ministry in treason to the Son of God. The doom of such unfaithful servants will be marked with peculiar severity and horror. The Lord, the righteous judge, will require at their hands the blood of their fellow-sinners ; and they shall perish with the perdition of those who *crucify him afresh, and put him to an open shame*.

Less fearful, indeed, but sufficient to strike our souls with alarm and dread, is the condition of one who preaches to others a gospel which he has not believed to his own salvation. What drudgery ! what wearisomeness ! to proclaim a Saviour whom he does not love ! Display the precept and the penalty of the law, he may. Declare the doctrine of the cross, he may. Expound the Scriptures, in general, he may. Defend the truth against its adversaries, he may. But how *can* he give to every one his portion of meat in due season ? How *can* he feed the sheep ? How feed the lambs of Jesus Christ ? How sympathize with the children of godly sorrow ? How accompany the pilgrim through the valley of the shadow of death ? How bind up the broken-hearted ? How comfort

others with the consolation wherewith he himself has been comforted of God ? For these, the most benignant offices of the evangelical ministry, talent however great, and learning however profound, if not sanctified by the grace, if not imbued with the Spirit of Christ, are good for nothing. In speculation a believer, in the efficient principles of character an unbeliever, their possessor will pronounce his own judgment. Leaving to apostates their whole pre-eminence of wo, he will find nothing enviable in his “portion among the hypocrites, where there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.”

Let those who are already in the ministry look to their personal interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, “lest, having preached the gospel to others, they themselves be castaways.” Let young men who aspire to the sacred office, give all diligence, in the first place, to “make their calling and election sure.” Let those to whom pertains the introduction of others into the ministry, endeavour, by all such means as do not imply the judging of a man’s state without external evidence, to ascertain the fruits of faith in their candidates for the pulpit. Let parents and friends be extremely cautious in destining a child, or a relative, at a very early age, to the ministry of reconciliation. Let him first, as a condemned sinner, “*receive* Christ Jesus the Lord ;” and then, as a saved sinner, “*walk* in

him," before he "profess to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

But let us not be quoted as countenancing, by any thing we have now said, the arrogance of certain preachers and "gifted brethren," who set themselves up as exclusive judges of grace in their neighbours; and, with the most offensive self-sufficiency, go about praying for "unconverted ministers." It would do such men no harm to commune now and then with their own hearts; complying with the advice of Paul to the fastidious teachers at Corinth, who "sought a proof of Christ speaking in him. Examine *yourselves*, whether *ye* be in the faith," lest they fall eventually under the reproof administered to those bloated religionists "which say, *stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou.*"

Piety, however indispensable to the ministry, is not, of itself, an adequate preparation. A man may be a very good man, and yet a very incompetent teacher. The apostle Paul has positively required that he be "apt to teach;"\* i. e. have the *faculty* of communicating instruction.

This comprehends

(1.) A *good natural capacity.*

We do not mean that every one who is admitted into the ministry ought to be a man of *genius*. Whatever be suggested by individual vanity, or

\* Διδασκτικός. 1 Tim. iii. 2.

the partial fondness of friends, genius is so extremely rare, that if it were essential to public office, the Christian pulpit, the bench of justice, the university-chair, or the senatorial seat, would very seldom be occupied.—When it does appear, it is misunderstood, fettered, tortured, and, as far as possible, crushed, by vulgar dulness, by scholastic pedants, by that medium race, the mere men of letters—we wish we were not compelled to add—and, too often, by small Theologians. It will, however, force its own way: and as its proper object and work lie out of the ordinary routine of official life, it cannot enter into the standard of fitness for official employment. On genius, therefore, it is vain to insist, for it cannot be had. But a good natural capacity is much more common, and should be peremptorily required. He who is not apt to learn, will never become apt to teach. Most people imagine that education is to do every thing, and nature nothing. But what is the province of education? Not to *create* faculties, but to call them forth. Natural capacity is the material with which education works: It is the soil which she cultivates, and where she sows the seeds of instruction. Expend your utmost labour and skill upon a brick, and you shall never impart to it the polish of marble. Why? simply for this reason, that it is a brick, and not marble. Let a lad be tolerably stocked with brain, and his improvement

in the hands of an *able* preceptor will repay every care, expense, and toil. But if that important article be wanting, it is a *hiatus valde deflendus*—there is no method of supplying such a lamentable lack. One would think that this is so evident as to be a mere truism. And yet, evident as it is, the incessant introduction into the ministry of men whose natural incapacity renders themselves and their office contemptible, shows that it is practically disregarded. We may not dissemble—the interests in jeopardy are too precious to admit of temporizing—It is too notorious to be denied—the very Christian ministry seem determined to try, upon the largest scale, that most absurd and hopeless experiment, the education of a block-head for public usefulness ! The instances, we believe, are comparatively few in which the powers of a youth are put to any reasonable test in order to ascertain whether, in point of intellect, he is really worth training up for the ministry. College diplomas, considering the dishonourable facility with which they are granted, are but suspicious pledges of either knowledge or talent. Some years ago, a young man who had been originally a maker of brooms, and had “studied divinity,” as it is termed, for two or three sessions, was exhibiting a specimen of his improvement before a foreign Presbytery ; and acquitted himself so little to their satisfaction, that they judged



it necessary to remand him to his first vocation; as more commensurate with his abilities. This decision was announced by a venerable old minister, in the following manner :—" Young man : It is the duty of all men to glorify God. But he calls them to glorify him in different ways, according to the gifts he bestows on them. Some he calls to glorify him by preaching the gospel of his Son; and others, by making besoms, (brooms.) Now, it is the unanimous judgment of this Presbytery, that he has not called you to the ministry, since he has not qualified you for it; and, therefore, that it is your duty to go home to your father, and glorify God by decent industry in making besoms."

The mode of the old gentleman was, to be sure, somewhat original; but his spirit ought to pervade the church. Would to God he had dropped his mantle, and that it had been borne on the wings of the wind across the Atlantic. If every preacher incompetent, from a gross defect of natural capacity, were put to the same trade with the young Scotchman, how great would be the increase of brooms !

Some who have accompanied us thus far, will stop short here, and discover a willingness to dispense with acquisitions which were formerly considered as essential to a well-ordered ministry. " Piety," they say, " will keep a man straight upon the main articles of truth ; and strength of mind,

though rough and unpolished, will enable him to impart them to others in a plain but impressive manner. This," they will add, "is vastly superior to the drowsy discourse of hundreds who have been through college, have studied divinity, and pass for great scholars."

We protest, once for all, against learned dullness. Little as we delight in solecisms and uncouthness, we will pardon the maulings of Priscian's\* head by the club of untutored power ; we shall esteem ourselves repaid for an injury to syntax, or for a rugged illustration, by nature's pathos and vigour ; when we should loose our patience with solemn insipidity, or doze under the influences of a leaden diploma ; nor deem it any recompense for the loss of our time, that we were put learnedly to sleep. Yet, bad as this is, it is still worse to suffer the insipidity without the poor consolation of some literature to qualify it—an affliction of much more frequent occurrence than the other.

But by what sort of artifice do men cozen their understanding into such argumentation as this ? "Talent without education is better than stupidity with it ; therefore, talent ought not to be educated ! ! " Here is a colt of excellent points and

\* PRISCIAN, a famous old grammarian. Hence one who violates the rules of grammar, is said to *break Priscian's head*.

mettle ; He is worth a score of you dull, blundering jades, that have been in harness ever since they were able to draw ; therefore, he will do very well without breaking ! It is surprising that so many, otherwise discreet persons, will maintain that to be wise and good in the Church of God, which they know to be absurd and mischievous in every thing else. In fact, talent, instead of being exempted from the necessity of cultivation, is alone worth the trouble, and needs cultivation in proportion to its strength. Talents are born, knowledge and skill are acquired, God creates the one ; he has left the other to be obtained by experience and industry. No talent can coin facts ; and without facts it will run to waste.—Without information it has no materials to work upon ; and without discipline it will work wrong. The power of doing evil is in exact proportion to the power of doing good. Petty minds produce petty harms and petty benefits. The errors of great minds are great errors, and draw after them deep, wide, and lasting consequences. It is of unutterable moment that they be set right in the beginning. This, in so far as depends upon human exertion, is the province of cultivation, which, of course, makes the

(2.) Part, of “aptness to teach.”

What ought it to embrace in a minister of Jesus Christ ? We may distribute it into two branches ;

the *first* consisting in literary acquirement; the *second*, in intellectual and moral discipline.

When we consider, that the Scriptures are written in languages which have not been spoken for ages—that they contain a succinct epitome of human history, in reference to the plan of grace, from the beginning to the end of time: going backward to the origin of nations, and forward to their extinction: marking by the sure word of prophecy, the various fates of various people, as well as the principle dispensations of providence toward the Church—that they relate events which cannot be vindicated against plausible objection, without painful research into the phenomena of our globe—that they are full of allusions to the works of God and of man—that they exhibit human character under all its varieties, intellectual and moral; individual and social—that their illustrations of truth, and formulas of speech are borrowed from objects equally strange to our habits and conceptions; from the face of the country; from the soil; from the climate; from the governments; from the idolatry; from the literature; from the state of domestic society; from the manners of the East—that the language of prophecy is wholly peculiar; being a system of symbols, which, though as certain in themselves, and as reducible to fixed laws of interpretation as any alphabetical language whatever, are perfectly un-

intelligible without the study of those laws—— When we consider these things, it is impossible not to perceive that the study of the Bible allows of the widest range of learning; and that without a respectable portion of it no man can “rightly divide the word of truth.”

Acquaintance with the *original tongues* is indispensable.

God has delivered his word to us in Hebrew and Greek, which being now, as they are commonly called, *dead* languages, are not liable to the fluctuations of a living one. These are the ultimate and the unalterable standard of truth, by which every doctrine must eventually be tried. Excellent versions the Churches have; versions, from which all that is to make us “wise unto salvation,” may be learned by the humblest peasant or labourer, as certainly as by the accomplished scholar; versions, undoubtedly susceptible of improvement; but which the licentious spirit of the times gives us very dubious promise of replacing with better. *Timeo Danaos*—we invariably suspect these *amended Bibles*, which the Iscariot-bands of professed Christianity are labouring, on both sides of the Atlantic, to thrust into the hands of the unlettered and the simple.\*

\* There is a late most audacious attempt to explain away the *whole gospel* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; absolutely stripping it, with the single exception of the doctrine of the resur-

But the excellence of versions does not supersede the necessity of studying the originals. The very fact, that God has preserved them by a care hardly short of miraculous, would, of itself, establish our position. Why were they committed to dead languages at all? Why thus carefully preserved amidst the ruined literature of the world, and the moral midnight of the "dark ages?" To be thrown, neglected, into a corner? To be kept as a curiosity to feed the worms, and amuse the antiquary? To be decried by gabbling impertinence; or give the ministers of religion an opportunity of displaying their sense and spirit, by treating as unworthy of *their* study, and as beneath *their* notice, those *original* volumes which their God has not thought it beneath him to consign, for their use, to the safeguard of his wonder-work-

rection, of every principle which makes it "glad tidings" to a sinner; substituting in the room of "redemption by the blood of Christ," a barren morality, little if any better than that of the Pagans, who were "without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world;"† and straining into the "cup of salvation" the distilled venom of Socinian blasphemy. This fatal draught is handed about with incessant assiduity, and put to the lips of the unthinking, that they may "sleep the sleep of death." All this under the modest and respectful guise of, "*an improved version of the New Testament.*" The precedent of such treachery was set long ago. Its author is "gone to his own place," But the "improved version," with its accompaniments, show that his treason has not perished with him. "Betray ye the Son of man with a kiss?"

ing providence? For ourselves, we doubt not that his chief design in permitting the Hebrew and Greek tongues to die away; in protecting the remnants of classical literature, and causing it to revive, was that his blessed book might be read in the original; and that his Church might be able to assert and maintain his truth inviolate, by having direct access to the fountains themselves. And as little do we doubt that the cry which modern times, and especially modern infidels have raised against classical literature, and in which some Christians and Christian ministers have unwittingly joined, is a deep, though to many an unsuspected stratagem of hell, to bring the original Scriptures into gradual disuse; and, then, by discrediting the versions, to involve Christianity in embarrassment and shame.

Independently on the argument to be derived from the extraordinary preservation of the sacred records, there are other demonstrations of the necessity of studying them in the original.

All human works partake of human infirmity; and are marked with characters of the age in which they are achieved. The remark is universally applicable, because the fact is universally true; and must be so, as it involves a contradiction, or something like one, to suppose it otherwise. The state of the sciences, the style of the fine arts, the very form of handwriting, at a par-

ticular period, are stamped with characters by which the date of performances in them can frequently be ascertained, with sufficient precision, many centuries afterwards. If a man write a book which has familiar and frequent references to different subjects of human knowledge, these references must be regulated by the general state of that knowledge; and if it labour under any material defects, must participate in those defects. No enormity of genius, no distance of views and discoveries, like those of Bacon and Newton, beyond the sphere of his contemporaries, will enable him to escape, in *all* things, the common imperfection.

Now the best versions of the Bible are but human works. Stupendous works, indeed, are some of them, all things considered, but still human. They bear strong traces of the state of knowledge upon many subjects at the time when they were made. The effect is, that innumerable passages of Scripture are incorrectly rendered. The vast extension of physical science, of acquaintance with Eastern customs, and even of philology, within the last fifty years, has established a multitude of Scriptural facts; has cleared up a multitude of obscurities; has rectified misrenderings and misinterpretations which no integrity or perspicacity could once avoid; has decisively refuted the objections of enemies. The



process is still going on, and will continue to go on. For it is the wonderful property of the book of God, that it has never yet been detected in a mistake, even when speaking on those subjects of which the knowledge was either partially or not at all possessed by the penmen. Its enemies have often charged it with ignorance and error; but a closer investigation has invariably proved the ignorance and the error to be their own.\*

\* VOLTAIRE, more malignant than CELSUS, more impudent, if possible, than PAINE, and more witty, peradventure, than all the rest of the goodly brotherhood put together, lost no opportunity of reviling the Scriptures. And if a plump, round lie were now and then necessary to his purpose, as he was not over-nice in his means, he did not permit the want of it to interrupt his “useful labours.” Once on a time he made a grand discovery, which was to dock off from the age of the book of Proverbs a handful of centuries, and so prove the book itself to be spurious. He found this good fortune in Chap. xxiii. 31. which the Latin Vulgate renders, “cum splenderit in *vitro* color ejus,” i. e. “when its colour,” (wine,) “is brilliant in the *glass*.” Now, drinking-glasses, being, according to Mons. Voltaire, a “very recent invention;” and being mentioned in this text, it follows that the book of Proverbs is *still more recent*, or it could not have mentioned them. Unhappily for the “grand” philosopher, the Hebrew original says nothing about *glass*; but simply “cup,” so that all Mr. V’s, argument can prove, at the utmost, is, that the Vulgate *translation* is later than Solomon; a most rare discovery! See the admirable work entitled *Lettres de quelques Juifs a M. de Voltaire*. Tom. III. p. 324, a performance which plays with the flippant infidel even as grimalkin playeth with an unlucky mouse; and of which the strong sense, superiour learning, grave irony, and blistering wit, threw Voltaire into as

† Dict. Philos. Art. Salomon.

But it is always difficult, and often impracticable, to push our advantages without a knowledge of the original. Under such a privation, the expounder or the advocate of revealed truth must trudge painfully on, yielding a blind credence to the assertion of another; and if, upon any occasion, the fidelity or the competency of his guide should happen to be suspected by himself, or impeached by others, he has no escape from the misery of suspense, or the shame of defeat. But when his acquaintance with the original enables him to measure all criticisms and glosses by that authoritative test, he can take his ground with a promptitude, and keep it with a confidence, second in value only to the ground itself.

Again. All living languages fluctuate. Old words become obsolete; new ones are coined; and of those which remain in vogue, multitudes gradually change their meaning, so as to convey in popular and even classical usage, ideas very different from what they expressed a century before. This fluctuation is extensive and rapid nearly in proportion to the varieties of industry, the competitions of skill, and the intercourse of nations.

great a rage, as Beattie's "*Essay on Truth*," threw the gentle David Hume. The point of their satire remains unblunted, and their reply to Voltaire unanswerable; notwithstanding the epithet of "pendant" applied to their author by Mons. Voltaire's distressed editor, fortified, too, by a philosophic quibble. Vid. *Oeuvres de Voltaire*, Tom. XLIII. p. 131. 8vo. 1785.

Eastern versions of the Bible suffer the least. The Eastern habits and languages being, for obvious reasons, more stable than those of the West. But from the changes which have passed upon the languages of Europe, the vernacular versions, understood according to the present acceptation of their terms, frequently put into the mouth of the sacred writer propositions most foreign to his sense ; and lead the unwary reader into false and hurtful conclusions. Strong examples might be adduced from our English Bible ; but our limits forbid the detail.

Further. The art of printing has multiplied books, we had almost said, into a nuisance. The multiplication of books has, in its turn, vitiated the art of printing. It has sunk from an employment for talents and erudition, into a mere mechanical craft. The voracious demand for books rendered this unavoidable. United with the boundless circulation of the Scriptures, with the quick succession of editions, and with the low price at which the copies must be furnished for common use, it has increased the number of typographical errors beyond all count. Some of these are of such a nature as to pervert the meaning of the passage, yet to preserve grammar and sense, and to defy correction from the context. Let us mention a curious instance. In 1 Cor. vi. 4. The apostle says, “ If ye have judgments of

things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are *least* esteemed in the Church !" One of the editions has it, "set them to judge who are *best* esteemed." A glance at the original detects the mistake. But, setting this aside, no man could tell with certainty, whether we should read "least," or "best;" and a hundred critical arguments might have been mustered to show that the wrong reading is the better.

Besides; there are many things, and those of importance, in every language, which disappear, or rather never appear in a translation. We know that this is doubted, denied, and even laughed at by many. We cannot help it. It is the privilege of ignorance to laugh; of insincerity, to misrepresent; and of captiousness, to doubt. Leaving them in the possession of their several honours, we combine the suffrages of all candid scholars. There is a colouring, a vivacity, a vigour, a comprehension, a pungency of idiom, a felicity of reference in the structure of a word or the peculiarity of a phrase, which never can be transferred. There is a clear opening of sense to an eye practised in the original, which a thick cloud mantles the moment it passes into a version. There is a precision of construction obvious to a scholar of taste, the causes of which are more a matter of feeling than of argument; and though perfectly decisive, are too delicate to be perceived by the

uncultivated sense. Yet, in their effects, they tinge and beautify the whole discussion of a subject.

In conclusion. The adversaries of evangelical truth and hope, are much addicted to the practice of assailing our faith through the medium of criticism. What they want in solidity, they make up in boldness and in show. When you press them with the *subject*, they will criticise all your heavy matter away into the thin air of *metaphor*; little concerned if, in following up their principle, they criticise God himself into a figure of speech. When you press them with a plain text, they will flout at the translation, abuse the translators, and hear nothing but the *original*. When you produce the original, as little to their comfort as the translation, they smell a corruption in the text, and it must be purged by *manuscripts*; *any* manuscript being good enough to amend or discard an *orthodox* expression. When the manuscripts are rebellious, which commonly happens, unphilosophical Christians as they are, they must receive the castigation of *critical acumen*, i. e. the guesses of an Arian or Socinian mender of the Bible, are to sway our consciences in the question of heaven and eternal life; or we are to be degraded from the rank of *rational* believers to the pitiable plight of bigots, fanatics, and simpletons.

To repress this effrontery, and to shield the

community from the assaults of this rabid fury ; as well as to meet the several exigencies enumerated above, there is no effectual means but the living teacher skilled in the original tongues, and imbued with the correspondent learning. The times awfully demand it. And if such employment does not require a separate profession for the ministry, and able and educated men in it, there is not, and cannot be, a human occupation to which every human being is not always and every where equally competent.

# CHURCH OF GOD.

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No. X.

## *Ministry.—Qualifications.*

To a critical knowledge of the original tongues, a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God must add an extensive acquaintance with *facts* necessary for explaining scriptural subjects.

These facts are greatly diversified in their nature, and are to be gathered from various provinces of human research. The more immediately important may be classed under the general heads of *historical* and *physical* facts.

To the historical class belong—

1. Annals ; which record distinguished events, ecclesiastical, civil, political, military, commercial, &c.

2. The government, resources, and institutions of a country.

3. The biography of famous individuals.

4. Public and private customs and manners.

5. The state of the sciences, of literature, and of the arts.

The *physical* class comprehends facts relating,

1. To the system of the world—

2. To those phenomena, the study of which forms, what is commonly called, Natural Philosophy; and in which the progress will be short and slow without the help of *mathematics*—

3. To natural geography, geology, &c.

4. To the natural history of animals, especially of man.

The catalogue might easily be enlarged; for there is no department of human knowledge or skill which does not furnish something of value to a good Divine. The design of the foregoing specification is merely to exhibit a summary of things which embrace copious details, and with which an accomplished and well-armed theologian ought to be conversant. An adept in all of them he can hardly become; but such an acquaintance with them as shall enable him to turn their lights in upon obscure parts of the holy writings; and to dissipate the artificial darkness created by the foe, he may and should acquire.

“ And can so much human learning—such volumes of history—such long narratives of political things and political men—so much natural philosophy, and astronomy, and geography, and all the rest of it, be necessary to preach the Gospel of



salvation? Cannot a minister prove from the Bible that men are lost and perishing, but he must fetch his arguments from the story of kings and kingdoms whereof not one of his audience in twenty ever heard the names? Can he not tell them of Jesus Christ, without telling them of Alexander the Great, or Mahommed, or Genghis Khan? Can he not display the grace of God, without the diagrams of Euclid? nor treat on scriptural symbols, without an algebraical equation? May not his doctrine be heavenly, unless he calculate eclipses? And must he be unable to dig for the hidden treasures of wisdom, without plunging into the belly of a mountain, or the bottom of the sea? Where did the Apostles get such qualifications? What had your human learning to do with the ‘mouth and wisdom’ with which Peter and John, two *ignorant and unlearned men*, put to silence all the Rabbis of the Sanhedrim? By what means do numbers of the most devoted, faithful, and successful labourers in the Lord’s vineyard, make full proof of their ministry, and commend themselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God?”

Against such glowing interrogation, reason wages an unequal war. Confounding and jumbling together things which have no alliance; tacking an absurd conclusion to an acknowledged truth, and pressing the fiction home upon the un-

tutored mind with an air of pious triumph, it cannot fail of persuading multitudes, who fancy they are convinced because they are amazed; and, arguing much more from their wonder than from their understanding, become the intractable converts of zeal without knowledge.

Our reply is short.

The Apostles furnish no precedent. All their defects were supplied by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. What progress would they have made without it? It will be time enough to quote them when we are placed in their circumstances, and can claim their supernatural aids. Let the Spirit of God be the miraculous instructor, and we shall immediately dispense with human learning. In that case we will leave the feet of Gamaliel, and hang upon the lips of a fisherman or a scavenger. Till then, we hold ourselves excused. But it is with the worst possible grace that we are referred to the Apostles as patterns of an *illiterate ministry*, when the Holy Ghost was at the pains to teach them, *by miracle*, things of which we are confidently told the Christian ministry have no need whatever!

As little can be gained by the examples of an illiterate ministry in later times and among ourselves.

That a plain, uneducated man, of good native sense, may unfold the elementary, which are the

essential, doctrines of the cross, with propriety, with interest, and with effect—that God has often used, and still uses, the ministry of such men in calling sinners to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ, is both true and consolatory. Nay, he has made individuals, alike destitute of information and of talent, the instruments of conversion and confirmation to other individuals of superiour minds and attainments. But we are not, therefore, to pick out all the unlearned lackbrains among Christians, and set them to instruct the men of sense and education. God's sovereignty over-rules our infirmities, our mistakes, and even our follies, for the production of good; when, without his interposition, they could have produced nothing but evil. Yet this does not alter the nature of things. It magnifies, by contrast, the greatness of God; but shows no respect to the littleness of man. Our infirmity is infirmity still; and our follies are follies still. They are not converted into strength, correctness, and wisdom—nor are they to be repeated by us—because God has graciously controlled them for our own benefit and the benefit of others. Talent is his gift; learning is obtained by the favour of his auspicious providence. His people are under a sad delusion when they affect to despise his bounty; and to honour that which it is given to destroy—we mean—*Ignorance* He is also a

sovereign. He may do as it pleaseth him. He can fit his instruments for their work. But his sovereignty is no rule of *our* action ; and we must take instruments as we find them ; i. e. such as *he* has made them. When we come with *our* offerings, we must bring of our *best*. As we cannot change the nature of means, we are bound to select those, which are, in themselves, best calculated to insure the end. Now ignorance is not so well adapted to instruct as knowledge is : nor can stupidity acquire or apply knowledge as talent can. God employed an ass to rebuke the madness of a prophet ; but it does not follow that other asses are destined to a similar office ; and are expected to bray as often as they encounter a prophet. We have no objection that modern Balaams shall be put to the same school ; but we must first see the same power exerted to qualify the Teacher and *enable* the “ dumb ass to speak with man’s voice ;” or we shall heartily join in requiting the noise of His *Dumbness* with a sound cudgelling ; the precedent in the book of Numbers to the contrary notwithstanding.

If good is effected by ignorant imbecility, the true conclusion is, that means make no difference when God chooses to act ; as all difficulties are equal, that is, are nothing, to omnipotence. But we abuse our reason ; injure the truth ; and affront the HOLY ONE, when, from such a fact we conclude,

whether formally or practically, that we are to clothe ignorance and imbecility with the authority, and assign them the duties of knowledge and power. We tacitly put ourselves on a level with God; we indirectly assert our omnipotence. Grant, as we cheerfully do, that, through the divine blessing, good has often been done, and much good too, by persons whom we should have pronounced unfit, on account of either talent or literature, or both, for the ministry of reconciliation—Does it follow, that, with the same blessing upon proper qualifications, the good would not have been much greater; especially as we do not argue on the supposition of miracles? It is a law of God's own enacting, and it is kept in operation by his continual agency, that all bodies shall gravitate, or tend in their motion, toward the center of the earth. But will a feather, therefore, overcome the resistance of the air as easily, and fall to the ground as rapidly, as a stone, seeing they are both acted upon by the same force? God preserves, by his Spirit, the functions of the animal economy. Shall, therefore, a kitten draw as much as a horse? It is his visitation which sustains our spirits. Shall the brains of a fool perform, on this account the intellectual exploits of genius? The analogy is perfect, because the principle is universal, pervading all the divine constitutions with which we have any acquaintance. The ar-

gument which it furnishes on the point before us, is irresistible; concluding with the force of nearly mathematical evidence, against the notion we are combatting; and demonstrating that, other things being equal, the most intelligent ministry will bring most glory to God, and most happiness to men. In the mean time, let Christian ministers and judicatories ponder solemnly the *principle* of the following extract from the prophet Malachi: *Ye brought that which was TORN, and the LAME, and the SICK; thus ye brought an offering. Should I accept this of your hand? saith JEHOVAH. But CURSED be the DECEIVER which hath in his flock a MALE, and voweth and sacrificeth unto JEHOVAH a CORRUPT thing! For I am a GREAT KING, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.* This fearful commination is levelled against the PRIESTS *who PROFANED JEHOVAH's name.* And the profanation consisted precisely in their consecrating to him the *worse*, when they might have consecrated the *better*. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!”

But all such declamation is founded upon a supposition which is manifestly false: viz. that a minister of the Gospel has nothing to do in his official instructions, but to insist upon the simplest doctrines of the Gospel in their simplest form. That they have been very extensively habituated to this practice where vital religion is cherished,

admits of no dispute. But that the habit is a good one, admits of much. We institute no comparison between *always* preaching the simple truths of Christ, and not preaching them at all, or preaching them very seldom, and very slightly. When my own conduct is criminated, it is no justification to plead that my neighbour's is worse. The evil to which we object, solemnly and decisively object, is, the keeping Christian people in a state of perpetual childhood. God has charged us to "leave the principles of the doctrines of Christ, and go on to perfection." He has forbidden us to be continually occupied in "laying the foundation of repentance from dead works; of faith toward God; of the doctrine of baptisms; of laying on of hands; of resurrection of the dead; and of eternal judgment." Yet it is not to be questioned; the fact is clear as day, that the mass of evangelical ministers never build above the "foundation;" never get out of the principles or mere rudiments of Christianity. Take what text of the Bible they will, you always find them teaching some one or other of these "rudiments;" always working at some part or other of this foundation. We do not blame them for this; but for doing nothing else. For seldom or never rising in their instructions higher than those things which the veriest novices in religion understand almost as well as themselves. There is little consultation

of the wants of different classes : little distribution of his portion to every one in due season. There is milk for babes. Good. Let the milk never be withheld : but there should be more. There is no meat for strong men. It is milk, milk, milk. This is the complaint. The effect is, that Christian knowledge is very scanty, and Christian attainments very low : so that hundreds and thousands of our most pious people are ready to be tossed about with every wind of doctrine which does not blow them out the precincts of their elementary principles. There are few incitements to study the Bible. With the exception of some doctrinal passages and moral precepts, it is a book of darkness. Some parts of it are even falling into neglect, and comparative contempt.

Hence the facility with which dissensions multiply, and all manner of sects and pretenders draw away disciples after them. Such is the effect. The immediate cause we have stated. The primary and efficient cause is more remote. *It is in the DEFECTIVE TRAINING of the MINISTRY itself.* We speak it boldly ; because it is a most serious, and a most seasonable, though a painful and unpopular truth. Incapacity we lay aside : but we cannot too deeply lament that where there is not this incurable malady, yet, partly from want of previous preparation, and partly from want of means to pursue their studies after entering upon their



functions, the ministers themselves cannot enrich their public instructions. The Bible is not expounded ; it cannot be expounded—It is not understood ; it cannot be understood by men without learning, however respectable their native powers. Who can illustrate the modes of speech used by the scripture, its allusions, its similes, its parables, its symbols, unimbued with the knowledge of Eastern climate, customs, arts, and institutions ? Who can trace and show the accomplishment of prophesy, without large historical inquiry ? Who can repel the attacks, and wipe off the aspersions of unbelievers, if he be a stranger to those researches from which the attacks derive their force, and the aspersions their filth ? The thing is impossible. In honest truth, the bible is to most of our clergy a sealed book. Their ignorance is unsuspected, because they have, for the most part, to deal with men more ignorant than themselves. But it is not to be conceived how few are the instances in which they could satisfy decent and proper questions, compared with those which should put them to silence. Here is the true secret of that limited sort of preaching which so generally prevails in our pulpits. Our ministry cannot help themselves. They do not know any thing else. Their communications run the length of the *matter* which they have to communicate. Even the fiercest decriers of human learning never

forget to display every patch and shred of it which they accidentally pick up. None more sure to turn up the bottom of their treasury than themselves. If any of them chance upon a smattering of letters, his light shall never expire under a bushel : the world shall be in no danger of losing the benefit of his lore. And though in thrusting it out upon his hearers he slander his authorities, by murdering their sense and their names together, he shall be admired as a prodigy, and revered as an Apostle. Say the ministers of religion what they will, if they employ no learning in their ministrations, it is because they have none to employ : and it is adding deception to misfortune, to play off their inability under the mask of a higher degree of spirituality of mind, and a purer desire of glorifying the divine teaching.

The evil is alarming ; it is enormous. It has so overgrown our country, and is so deeply rooted, that its eradication by human effort is at best problematical. So long, and so commonly have both ministers and people been accustomed to it, that it is hard to convince many of them of its being an evil at all. The standard of ministerial character has been gradually lowered down from its once imposing elevation to the level of every voluble and boisterous prater. That which was formerly considered as the acquisition “ of children and those of weaker capacity,” is now, with many.

the ministerial attainment. The Churches have begun to reap the fruits of that tree which their own apathy and parsimony have nourished, if not planted. The bitter morsel has been only tasted hitherto. The meal of gall and wormwood is yet to come. Let them not deceive themselves. The period of desolation is at hand. They have been warned and entreated, years and years together, to provide for the suitable education of their ministry; and they have been deaf as adders to the voice of expostulation. Slow-paced retribution has begun her march, and will fulfil her work. Even now, the United States must be searched through for a single man fit to occupy a post of eminence or of danger; and the dearth threatens to increase. Let us not have the lullaby of Peace, peace, when fearful facts thicken upon us every hour. If the same apathy shall continue; if strenuous exertions be not speedily, extensively, and perseveringly used, there will be no averting the ruin. Things must rush on from bad to worse, till the truth of the Gospel is corrupted, its glory obscured, and its power withdrawn, an horror of thick darkness overspread the land.

“Knowledge is power,” in the same sense in which every other instrument may be denominated power; viz. as a means to an end. By itself it is as inefficient as any material weapon whatever. The weapon is useless without a hand to

employ it. No better is knowledge detached from a sound head. It would be wasting time to prove that mere learning is among the most feeble and inert of human things. Prodigies of erudition are frequently destitute of common sense; and, in the practical business of life, in all that relates to the direction of men, are more impotent than children. Such reservoirs of unassorted facts answer one good purpose, and only one; they furnish materials for those who can *think*. Heavy plodding industry must be content with the useful property, and the humble praise, of a pioneer for brain. Learning, therefore, although indispensable to an "ability to teach," will not of itself, impart that ability. To give it its proper effect two things are necessary:

1. Good sense.

2. Good sense well disciplined.

On the first we have already expressed our opinion; but its great importance will excuse a few additional remarks.

Were we reduced to the alternative of choosing between good sense without learning, and learning without good sense, we should not hesitate for a moment. Good sense, alone, will be always respectable; learning, alone, almost always ridiculous. No being is so credulous, so easily duped, so regularly absurd, so good for nothing upon an emergency, so utterly incapable of conducting

affairs, as a man whose memory is stored with all manner of information, yet is destitute of understanding to use it rightly. Whenever he comes into collision with native vigour, however uncultivated, he is sure to provide the means of his own overthrow. He brings forth his learning with the confidence of victory, and is amazed to find his artillery wrested from him, and turned instantaneously upon himself. Without the sagacity to perceive his error, he is in danger of repeating it as often as he turns disputant. A fact is to him a fact; and the odds are infinitely against him, that out of the million facts at his command, he shall select the one least likely to serve him, and that when, by the misapplication of one part of his learning he has drawn himself into difficulty, he will be unable, with all the rest of it to draw himself out again. The Christian story is full of examples of this mismanagement. Even the pulpit, where the preacher ought at least to be considerate, is doomed to dishonour, when occupied by indiscretion. There are many subjects which *must* be handled, but which require caution, dexterity, and delicacy.

Men of great literature, and even of good manners, who never offend against modesty, make most absurd mistakes in delivering to one audience discourses fit for another of entirely different character. They are very apt to do so, if they have

allowed themselves to be absorbed in a particular theme. Their favourite must be the favourite of all the world. Abstruse demonstrations, which years of study have rendered familiar to themselves, must, of course, be evident to the mechanic and the husbandman. An English divine, who was deeply enamoured of the study of *Opticks*, and was a very distinguished proficient in all its minutiae, could scarcely preach on a text in the bible without sliding into his darling discussions. Accordingly, having to preach to a plain country congregation in Kent, he lectured them with much pith and animation, on his *dioptricks*, and *catoptricks*, his *refractions*, *reflexions*, and *angles of incidence*. They were greatly edified, no doubt; and the preacher was much delighted. It happened, however, that in going from church to the house of a substantial farmer, his host thus accosted him. “*Doctor, you have given us an excellent sermon to-day : but I believe you made one mistake.*” “*Mistake!*” exclaimed the Dr. “*Sir, that is impossible, it was all demonstration ! !*” “*True, your Reverence,*” quoth Hodge, “*but them there things that you preached so much about you called Hopsticks ; now in our country, here in Kent, we call ’em Hop-poles.*” We think we have heard, in the course of our lives, sermons nearly as well adapted to time and place, and quite as instructive to the people.

The injudicious treatment of types, parables,

and all figurative language, has been so common, that it ceases to surprise and almost to displease. Habit gradually renders us insensible to faults which, at first, strike us with great force ; and the unquestioned piety of many public teachers serves as a mantle for even their absurdity. In every walk of life, superiors will be imitated by inferiors. Blemishes are much more easily copied than excellence ; and when the aberrations of thought have imparted respectability to a bad taste, the evil becomes almost incurable in minds of a secondary order. The irregular sportings of an active and untrained imagination, seduce, by their glare, the footsteps of imitation ; and, what was, in the original, a splendid defect, becomes in the copy an unpardonable offence. Thus have successive generations of preachers regularly improving upon bad models, displayed their ingenuity in marring the beauty of the Scripture, in destroying the harmony of its parts, in breaking off the fine points of its most exquisite passages ; and when they have committed all these ravages, and converted the book of God into a book of quibbles and conundrums, they please themselves with the self-flattery of having performed wonders of instruction and edification. Typical and figurative texts must be hunted to death. The more points of resemblance, the abler, of course, is the preacher ; and the more he can find in a figure than

other people can, the more, are they taught to believe, do they see of the fulness of the Scriptures. *How* he made his discoveries, is a question which few think of asking. The marvellous has a patent for a sort of implicit faith. For the many, it is sufficient that he made them ; sagaciously concluding that if the wonders had not been there, he could not have found them. There is, indeed, one consolation, and it is not a small one, that preachers who love the precious doctrines of the cross, will preach what is true in itself, however they may desert or mangle their texts. Yet this is no excuse for coupling with it all manner of nonsense, and fathering it upon the wisdom of God.

The most insufferable departure from the principles of sound exposition is that perversion of the plain facts of the Bible which is called *spiritualizing them*. As if there were not passages enough which contain fairly and unequivocally, according to the laws of proper construction, every doctrine of the Gospel ! as if the Spirit of God had not made his own book spiritual enough !

It is inconceivable what havoc this species of mania, for it deserves no better name, has made in the sober and dignified lessons of divine revelation. And it shows how powerful is the



influence of an irrational fashion, when even great men are swept by it into the bog of absurdity. Massillon's sermon on the impotent folk around the pool of Bethesda, with all its eloquence, cannot escape from this censure. We have before us a thing called a sermon, prepared for the press too ; which is a *morceau* in this kind of skill.

The author takes for his subject the history of Ehud's adventure when he killed Eglon, the king of Moab, and delivered Israel. After pathetically lamenting, in his introduction, the blindness of those who perceive in the context nothing but a plain history, he proceeds to unfold the mysteries which unveiled themselves to his eye. Everything is transformed into a type. Ehud is a type ; his dagger is a type ; his left-handedness a type ; the quarries by which he passed a type. In a word, he and his adventures are types of Christ and his providence. Eglon, too, is a type ; a type of Satan ; his big belly, fat, dirt, and all. But how was Eglon's *fat* typical of Satan ? You may wonder, reader, but if you have any sense, you will never guess——Why even thus. Satan is the god of this world ; he works in the children of disobedience. These children of disobedience are a vast multitude. The whole of them together serve as a *body* for Satan ; so that he is a *fat* devil indeed ! We

are not caricaturing. We are relating a simple fact without exaggeration, and even *below* the truth ! And this vile gibberish must be palmed upon plain people as *spiritual* preaching ! Another sample occurred in a discourse upon Gen. xxix. 2. where Jacob is related to have “ looked, and behold, a well in the field ; and lo ! there were three flocks of sheep lying by it.” This is all type. The three flocks typify the three dispensations, to wit, the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian. The well, too, is typical. And the preacher having desired his hearers carefully to observe that the “ well was in the field,” broke out into this edifying exclamation, “ What a mercy, my brethren, that the *field* was not in the well ! !”

We have quoted strong cases, but not stronger than others we could quote. They are the genuine consequences of that vicious mode of parodying the Bible, from which good sense is the only preservative. Considering how much of this harlequin trumpery is bandied about in the Church under the garb of *spiritual preaching*, it is little short of a miracle that the religion of Christ Jesus is not burlesqued out of the world.”\*

\* This number was never finished by the author. Nor has any paper been found, containing his thoughts upon “ the mode of preserving, a standing ministry,” which was to form the last topic of this series.—ED.

A N A C T

CONCERNING FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION,

DRAWN UP BY DR. MASON,

EMITTED BY THE

ASSOCIATE REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA,

JUNE 12, 1798.

# AN ACT CONCERNING FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION;

EMITTED BY THE  
ASSOCIATE REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA,  
JUNE 12, 1798.

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THE ministers and elders in synod assembled, finding that dangerous errors are entertained and propagated concerning the doctrines of saving faith and of justification, feel it their duty to declare, and by this act they do declare what they conceive the holy scriptures to teach on these important points, chiefly as they are at present perverted or opposed.

## I. Of the *appropriation* and *assurance* of faith.

*Faith*, in its general idea, is assent to, and reliance on, testimony. Its peculiar character must arise from the testimony on which it is founded. That divine faith, therefore, by which alone sinners are saved, must be an assent to, and reliance on, the divine testimony, as exhibited in the written word. The gospel is expressly termed the RECORD OR TESTIMONY

*which God gave of his Son, and faith a BELIEVING of this record. (1 John v. 10.)* In perfect harmony with the scriptures, its general character, its special office, and its true and only warrant, are comprehended in the concise and correct definition of the shorter catechism. “Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel.”

1. In its general character, which it has in common with other benefits of the covenant, it is said to be a *saving grace*.

A *grace*, or a free gift; an unmerited favor. *It is the GIFT of God*, and that both in its principle and in its exercises. Christians *believe even as the Lord GIVETH to every man*. And it is he who *deals out to every man the MEASURE of faith*.

A *grace*—being purchased for us by Christ’s precious blood, and freely bestowed on us for his sake. *It is given unto us IN THE BEHALF OF CHRIST to believe on him*.

A *grace*—because it is wrought in the heart of a sinner by the free Spirit of God, through the instrumentality of the word. For this reason he is called *the SPIRIT OF FAITH*; and the people of God *believe according to the working of HIS MIGHTY POWER, which, by the Spirit,*

*he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. And this faith, so produced, cometh by hearing, and hearing by the WORD OF GOD.*

This faith *saves*. As its origin is grace, so its issue is salvation from sin and from wrath both here and hereafter. *He that believeth SHALL be saved; he HATH everlasting life, and shall NOT COME into condemnation; but shall receive the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul.*

2. The *special office* of faith is to receive, and rest upon Christ alone for salvation. But, in order to have just views of this part of the subject, we are previously to consider the *true and only warrant of faith*, which is the *free offer of Christ to us in the gospel*.

All that is necessary for elucidating this point may be summed up in the following propositions :

(1.) God hath made a *grant* of his Son, Jesus Christ, as an all-sufficient Saviour, to a lost and perishing world. He hath not merely revealed a general knowledge of him, but has directly and solemnly *given* him to sinners as such that they may be saved. *God so loved the world that he GAVE his only begotten*

*Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

(2.) This gift is *absolutely free*; independent, in every possible manner, on the worthiness or good qualities of men. This is essential to the very nature of his gift. *Redemption through the blood of Christ is according to the riches of his grace. It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save the chief of sinners.*

(3.) This gift is indiscriminately to all the hearers of the gospel, and to every one of them in particular. *Unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given. The word is nigh THEE, even in THY mouth, and in THINE heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach: That if THOU shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, THOU shalt be saved. No sins, however enormous or aggravated, place any sinner beyond the reach of this liberal grant. The very terms in which it is conveyed suppose the objects of it to be unbelieving, unrighteous, and even obstinate in transgression. God gave his only begotten Son, that whoever BELIEVETH on him might not perish; manifestly implying that they to whom he is given are unbelievers. The Lord Christ, whose invitations to sinners must be grounded on the*

Father's gift of him as the covenant of the people, thus addresses them : *Hearken unto me, YE STOUT-HEARTED, that are FAR from righteousness ; I bring near my righteousness.*

The Saviour thus given, God hath made it the duty of every one who hears the gospel to accept, that he may be saved ; and he cannot reject the gift but at the peril of his soul. *This is the commandment of God, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.*

Now, the divine command requiring all the hearers of the gospel to receive the Lord Jesus for salvation, it is manifest that he is freely given in the gospel offer to every one of them in particular. Moreover, all the hearers of the gospel are either believers or unbelievers. That Christ was offered to believers is evident from the fact that they have received him, and are saved by him ; and that he is offered to unbelievers is no less evident, because they will be condemned for their unbelief. *He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* But the righteous Lord, who loveth righteousness, will not condemn sinners for rejecting an offer which was never made.

From all this it results, that God hath laid in his word a firm foundation for the faith of sinners—that they have his own *warrant*, and



therefore a perfect *right*, to take the Lord Jesus in all his grace and fullness for their own salvation *in particular*.

Now, as saving faith must correspond both with the warrant of the divine testimony, and with the right to an offered Saviour which that warrant creates, it is properly asserted to be *a receiving and resting upon Christ alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel*.

It is to be carefully noted, that the true and only object of faith is the Lord Jesus Christ himself, set forth and given to sinners *as such*, in the free promise of the gospel; and that, in believing, we receive and rest upon HIM, and upon him *alone*, in all those relations, for all those ends, and in that manner which the divine testimony exhibits, and thus *set to our seal that God is true*.

This *receiving* of Christ and *resting* upon him are usually termed the *appropriation* and *assurance* of faith. By the former we take the Lord Jesus, who is ours in the general grant, to be ours in personal possession. By the latter we trust in him that we shall be saved; believing, that whatever he did for any of the human race he did for *us*, and that whatever God hath promised to his people shall be performed unto *us*. These are not to be considered as different acts, but as essential pro-

perties of the grace of faith. And that they are essential to it is most demonstrable.

*First*, then ; *Appropriation* of the Lord Jesus to ourselves, for our own salvation in particular, is essential to saving faith--For,

1. Without such an appropriation faith could not answer to its warrant in the divine testimony, which, as hath been proved, tenders Christ to every one in particular ; nor to the authority of the divine command, which requires every one in particular to take him thus tendered.

2. Without such an appropriation there would be no material difference between the faith of God's people, and that of hypocrites or devils. Both may believe in general that Christ died for sinners ; that God is in him, reconciling the world unto himself ; that he is able to save sinners, and that many shall be saved by him. Mere assent to the abstract truth of the Gospel does not and cannot imply any complacency or interest in the salvation which it reveals. But that faith which may be found in the devils and the damned can in no sense be *saving* faith.

3. The condemnation of the law is particular. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* When the Holy Ghost convinces

of sin, the sinner sees himself in particular shut up under the curse. *Thou art the man*, says the violated law; *I am the man*, replies his awakened conscience. Nor is it possible that he should have peace or safety till the blood of Christ purge his conscience, and he, for himself, be delivered from the curse. Therefore, if there were not in believing a particular application of Christ to the soul, the curse of the law would be more efficacious to destroy than the blood of Christ to save.

4. Salvation is particular. A sentence of justification must pass upon, and a work of sanctification be wrought in, *every one* who shall see the kingdom of God. But justification, and sanctification, and whatever else belongs to the salvation of the gospel, flow unto us only in and through Christ Jesus. And as we receive his benefits in believing; as they cannot be separated from himself; and as they are all communicated by particular application to our souls, it is evident that the faith which embraces him, and with him his benefits, is a faith of particular appropriation. *He is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*

5. The experience of God's people, as it is described in his word, proves that their faith is an appropriating faith. Whether they re-

joice in the light, or mourn under the hidings, of his countenance, they equally claim him as *their* God, even *their own* God. *I will love thee, O Lord, MY strength. The Lord is MY rock, and MY fortress, and MY deliverer ; MY God, MY strength, in whom I will trust ; MY buckler, and the horn of MY salvation, and MY high tower. Thou art the God of MY strength : Why dost thou cast me off ? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy ? O send out thy light and thy truth—Then will I go—unto God MY exceeding joy : Yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, MY God.*

6. The scripture continually ascribes this appropriation to faith. It is illustrated by figures, than which nothing can more strongly mark its appropriating quality. It *receives* the Lord Jesus as a gift—*puts him on* as a garment—*flees to him* as a refuge—*lays hold* of him as a hope—*claims him* as a portion—*feeds upon him* as the living bread which came down from heaven. This indeed is the very life of a believer's soul, the fountain of his hope, his peace, his consolation, that Christ is *his* Saviour, and God, in Christ, *his* covenant-God.

*Secondly.* In believing we not only appropriate the Lord Jesus to ourselves, but are persuaded that whatever he did for the salvation of sinners he did for *us*, and that whatever

God has promised to his people shall be performed to *us*. This persuasion is the *assurance* of faith, and is inseparable from it.

1. Faith being an assent to and a reliance on testimony, respects nothing but the veracity of the testifier. It is this which distinguishes it from all other principles, and which is essential to every kind of it, in every degree, and under every circumstance. Now the testimony of the living God hath set forth the Lord Jesus as a propitiation through faith in his blood. There can be no medium between receiving him by faith and rejecting him by unbelief; and in believing we can believe nothing but what God hath testified, because this is the sole ground of our faith. But he hath testified, that whatever Christ did as a Saviour he did for them who receive him; and that to them, and every one of them, all the exceeding great and precious promises shall certainly be accomplished. I cannot, therefore, cast my soul upon Christ for salvation without believing the divine testimony; and this assures me, that as a believer I in particular shall be saved; so that my faith, corresponding with God's testimony, necessarily includes a persuasion of my own salvation in particular.

2. In the scripture faith is uniformly opposed to doubting. *If ye have faith and doubt not. O*

*thou of little faith, whereof didst thou doubt? If a man lack wisdom let him ask of God—but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; but doubting being the want of assurance, and being the reverse of faith, assurance is necessarily of the essence of faith.*

3. The testimony of God's word to this property of faith is clear and decisive. It forms the chief part of the definition which the Holy Ghost has given. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.\** We are exhorted to *draw nigh to the holiest of all with true hearts, and in the full assurance of faith.* Where the truth contended for is doubly established. (1.) By direct assertion; *The assurance of faith*, i. e., the assurance which belongs to faith; or else the expression is destitute of meaning. (2.) By allowing degrees in this assurance—*the FULL assurance of faith.* Which implies the existence of the assurance itself; for a thing which has no being cannot have degrees of being. These passages alone, and especially in connection with others which represent faith as *building on Christ the foundation, trusting in him, resting and leaning on him*, do fully prove that assurance is of the nature of faith.

\* The original word, rendered "evidence," signifies demonstration—argument which forbids reply.

4. The fruits of faith do also bespeak assurance. Believers have peace in their consciences; they are freed from the dominion of sin; they overcome the world; they receive from the fullness of Christ Jesus; they mind the things of the Spirit, &c. All these blessings are the subject of promise, and are enjoyed only in the way of believing the promise. But how can he believe the promise who has no *confidence* in it? and how can a sinner have relief from the terrors of the law? How can this enlightened conscience be pacified? Much more, how can he walk in newness of life, unless he be persuaded that he in particular is reconciled to God; that he in particular shall be saved; and unless he repose his soul upon the faithfulness of God in Christ, who hath promised to do to him and for him far more abundantly than he can ask or think?

Against this doctrine of faith it cannot be justly objected, “that it requires every one who hears the gospel to believe that Christ died for him in particular, and thus terminates in the error of universal redemption.”

This consequence is avoided by a very plain and important distinction between faith as a *general duty* and as a *special grace*. As a general duty, it is to believe assuredly on the tes-

*timony of God*, who cannot lie, that Christ Jesus is *freely given* in the gospel offer to *me* in particular; and to take him to myself, as the Father's gift, for my own particular salvation; persuaded, in thus receiving him, that I shall be saved. It is this receiving of Christ which converts the indefinite promise of salvation to believers into a promise of salvation to me in particular; and without this appropriation of Christ none have a right to conclude that he died for them and that they shall be saved. As a special grace, faith does actually receive the Lord Jesus, and thus binds the divine faithfulness to the particular salvation of him who believes; so that he may warrantably say and ought to be persuaded, and in some measure is persuaded, that whatever Christ did for sinners he did for *him*, and whatever God hath promised to his people shall be accomplished to *him*.

Nor can it be objected, that "this doctrine of faith, representing true believers as at all times undoubtedly assured of their own gracious state, is inconsistent with Christian experience, and with the encouragements held forth in scripture to those who labor under doubts and fears; and tends to make sad the hearts of those whom God hath not made sad."



The question is not concerning a believer's opinions of his state, which are influenced not only by his faith but by his feelings, by temptations, by corruptions, and especially by unbelief, but concerning the nature of his faith itself. That this is sometimes strong, sometimes weak, yea, so weak that he cannot discern its operations, and even disputes its existence, is most certain; but faith he has, notwithstanding. His being unconscious of it at the time does no more prove the want of it, than unconsciousness of the vital motions of the body proves a state of death. Though his faith be small as a grain of mustard-seed, and feeble as the first motion of embryo life, it is essentially the same with the branching tree, and with the active energy of a perfect man. It is, therefore, as really opposed to every kind of doubting in its faintest as in its most vigorous exercise. The difference lies only in degree. Doubting believers there are, but doubting faith there cannot be. In so far as a believer doubts, he is under the power of unbelief; for be his darkness and his fears what they may, they prevail exactly in the same proportion as his faith fails. A doubting faith, then, is equivalent to an unbelieving faith; or, which is the same thing, a believing unbelief. But this is a contradiction. It is therefore unde-

niable, that in the midst of conflict and dejection, the believer does and cannot but trust, and that for himself, in the mercy and faithfulness of his covenant-God. This is evinced to others, and may be evinced to the satisfaction of his own soul by his clinging to the Lord Christ as his only hope, and by his horror at the thought of relinquishing his claim to the promises, and to the living God as his portion. Poor as he may call his hope, he would not barter it for millions of worlds. This speaks a trust, and that not a slender one, in the Lord's promise, in Christ, for personal salvation; and this trust is precisely the assurance asserted as essential to saving faith.

It would greatly conduce to clear views of this subject were the distinction between the assurance of *faith* and the assurance of *sense* rightly understood and inculcated. When we speak of assurance as essential to faith, many suppose we teach that none can be real Christians who do not *feel* that they have passed from death unto life; and have not unclouded and triumphant views of their own interest in Christ, so as to say, under the *manifestations* of his love, "my beloved is mine, and I am his." But God forbid that we should thus offend against the generation of his children. That many of them want such an assurance

may not be questioned. This however is the assurance, not of faith but of sense ; and vastly different they are. The object of the former is Christ revealed in the *word* ; the object of the latter Christ revealed in the *heart*. The ground of the former is the testimony of God *without us* ; that of the latter the work of the Spirit *within us*. The one embraces the promise, looking at nothing but the veracity of the promiser ; the other enjoys the promise in the sweetness of its actual accomplishment. Faith trusts for pardon to the blood of Christ ; sense asserts pardon from the comfortable intimations of it to the soul. By faith we take the Lord Jesus for salvation ; by sense we *feel* that we are saved, from the Spirit's shining on his own gracious work in our hearts.

These kinds of assurance, so different in their nature, are very frequently separated. The assurance of faith may be, and often is, in lively exercise, when the other is completely withdrawn. “ Zion said, *My Lord hath forgotten me* ; and the Spouse, *My Beloved hath withdrawn himself and was gone*.” He may be a forgetting and withdrawing God to my feelings, and yet to my faith, *my God and my Lord still*.” This case is accurately described by the prophet. *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that*

*walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. Here the believer, one who fears the Lord, is supposed to be absolutely destitute of sensible assurance, for he walks in darkness and has no light; yet he is required to exercise the assurance of his faith by TRUSTING in the Lord, and staying upon HIS God.*

Seeing, therefore, that the scriptures teach that there is in saving faith a special appropriation of the Lord Jesus Christ to the soul, with a persuasion of its particular salvation through him; and that this doctrine is in no-wise contrary, but most conformable to the experience of the saints; the synod do reject, and solemnly testify against the prevailing errors, that justifying faith does not necessarily contain an appropriation of Christ to ourselves, as our own Saviour in particular; nor any assurance that we in particular shall be saved; but merely a belief and persuasion of God's mercy in Christ, and of his ability and willingness to save those who come unto God through him. And the synod do warn their people against the principles herein condemned as contrary to the faith of God's elect; as tending to encourage in sinners a lying hope, founded on a general assent to the truth of the

gospel ; and to mar instead of promoting the growth and consolation of believers.

## II. OF JUSTIFICATION.

Justification, being the reverse of condemnation, expresses a change, not of personal qualities, but of relative state. For, as condemnation does not make the subjects thereof wicked, so justification does not make them holy. But as the former is a sentence according to law, declaring a person unrighteous and adjudging him to punishment, so the latter is a sentence according to law, acquitting him from guilt and declaring him righteous. In justifying sinners, the Most High God, as an upright moral Governor, passes a sentence, *wherein he pardoneth all their sins, and accepteth them as righteous in his sight.* For he *forgiveth all their iniquities, and makes them accepted in the Beloved.*

This justification is an *act*, and is therefore completed at once. It is necessarily an *act*, because it is a legal sentence ; and an act cannot be progressive : this is the property of a *work*.

The origin of justification is the sovereign grace of God—we are *justified freely by his grace.*

The meritorious cause of it; that which renders it meet and right for God to absolve the sinner from the curse and receive him into favor, and on account of which he is just in justifying, is the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, consisting of his whole obedience to the law, both in its precept and penalty. *We have redemption through his blood, and by his obedience many are made righteous.*

This righteousness is conveyed to us by *imputation*; that is, is placed to our account as really and effectively as if it had been accomplished in our own persons. He was *made under the law*; so under it as to become *SIN for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*; i. e. as our sin, being charged on him, is sustained in law, as a sufficient reason for exacting from him, in our name, full compliance with all the demands of justice; so that compliance, which is his righteousness, being imputed unto us, is sustained in law as a sufficient reason for acquitting us, in his name, from guilt, and conferring on us a title to everlasting life. *The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of all*; and, therefore, *by his stripes we are healed.*

With the imputation of the Surety's righteousness on the part of God the Judge, there is necessarily connected the cordial reception

of it on our part. This is done by faith, the faith of the operation of God. It is in believing on the Lord Jesus, or, as has already been explained, accepting him for righteousness; on the divine warrant, that our *persons* are released from the curse, and we are *personally* instated in the right to the inheritance. In this sense, and in this only, does faith justify; not as being, in any possible form or degree, our justifying righteousness; but simply as it embraces the righteousness of the Surety to the entire exclusion of our own. So speaks the scripture: We are *justified by faith*; only as it is *faith in his blood*.

Hence it is apparent that personal justification takes place at the moment of believing, and not before. But as this part of the doctrine of justification has been recently and boldly denied within the bounds of the synod, they judge it their duty briefly to confirm it, and to bear their testimony against the contrary error.

1. It is not righteousness as *imputed* merely that justifies, but as *received* also. On this the scriptures lay particular stress. *As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God*; which receiving is immediately explained by *believing on his name*. No righteousness can justify me at the bar of justice,

unless I am warranted in law to plead it as my own. It is palpably absurd to plead a righteousness which I reject. The very plea supposes that the righteousness is mine, and that I trust in it. Now, the righteousness of Christ is not mine in possession till I accept it as the Father's gift, which I do in believing. Before believing, therefore, I have no righteousness to oppose to the claims of the law, and consequently neither am nor can be justified. It will not be questioned that the Lord never imputes righteousness to those who never believe, and that he always bestows the grace of faith on those to whom he imputes righteousness. And this demonstrates that there subsists such a connection between imputation on his part and faith on ours, that without the latter the former could not produce its effect. But that effect is our justification; therefore justification cannot take place before believing.

2. The law applies its curse to the person of every sinner in particular, and its terror to the conscience of every convinced sinner in particular.

That the gospel, as the ministration of righteousness, may be directly opposed to the law as the ministration of condemnation, and that its effect may completely destroy the effect of



the law's curse, it is necessary that there be a particular application of righteousness to the person of the sinner, and that the peace-speaking blood of Jesus be particularly applied to his conscience. Both are asserted in the scripture. Believers are *elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through SPRINKLING of the blood of Jesus Christ which purges their conscience from DEAD WORKS*. But it has been shown under the preceding head, that it is faith which appropriates the Lord Christ in his saving benefits. And as there is no justification before he be thus appropriated, there can be none before believing.

3. The scriptures divide the hearers of the gospel into believers and unbelievers, and pronounce upon them sentences according to their respective characters. *He that believeth is not condemned; he is justified from all things; he hath everlasting life. While he that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him. Till the sinner believe he is an unbeliever; and as long as he continues so he is in a state of condemnation: the wrath of God abideth on him. Justification, therefore, before believing, is impossible; it exhibits a monster which the Bible cannot know, a justified unbeliever. It includes the revolting absurdity of a man's being, at the same time, and*

in the same respects, both acquitted and condemned, both in a state of favor and in a state of wrath, at once a partaker of Christ and an heir of hell.

However plain and peremptory the scriptural doctrine on this point, there are not wanting some to corrupt and oppose it by teaching, not only that justification precedes believing, but that the elect were justified from eternity.

If nothing more were meant than that the Lord, from eternity, *purposed* to justify his elect through the righteousness of their Head, Jesus Christ, and that this gracious purpose or decree infallibly secures their justification in time, it would be a glorious truth. Though to call this *justification*, when it is in fact the same with *election*, would be a strange abuse of terms, and would engender an idle and unedifying strife of words. But it is contended that justification strictly and properly speaking is eternal: that Jehovah, having from eternity accepted the suretyship of the Son, accepted, and therefore justified, the elect in him: that as his will to elect is election, so his will to justify is justification, that this being eternally an *immanent* act of the Divine Mind, is the true justification: that the *transient* act, which passes in time on the person of a sinner, and which we style justification, is only an intima-

tion to his conscience of what was done in eternity : and that the proper business of faith is not to justify, but to impart to the believer a clear manifestation and a comfortable sense of his eternal justification.

How contrary all this is to the nature of things, to the testimony of God's word, and to the experience of his people, may be easily demonstrated.

1. Justification, being the sentence of God the Judge, acquitting the sinner from guilt and pronouncing him righteous according to the tenor of the moral law, necessarily implies both the existence of the law and the breach of it by the person justified ; neither of which can consist with the doctrine of eternal justification.

2. If, as is alleged, the will to justify is justification, as the will to elect is election, it is certain that the will to create is creation, the will to sanctify sanctification, the will to save salvation ; so that men were created, sanctified, saved from eternity.

That sanctification is a change of personal qualities, and justification of legal relations, will neither alter the question nor remove the difficulty ; for justification as necessarily supposes the existence of the relations affected by it, as sanctification does the existence of

the person sanctified. Both these blessings impart a real and glorious change; only the subject of the latter is a sinner's person, and of the former his state. Beside, condemnation affects only legal relations; and if the will to justify is justification, the will to condemn must be condemnation; so that mankind were condemned from eternity; that is, eternally before the covenant for the breach of which they were condemned had any being: or else the covenant with Adam was as eternal as the covenant with Christ; i. e. was made with Adam an eternity before he was created.

3. If the elect were justified from eternity in virtue of their being from eternity in Christ, by covenant representation, it must follow, either that they never were in Adam as a head of condemnation, or else that they were condemned in Adam after their justification in Christ; because the latter was from eternity and the former only in time; for it is evident that they could not be condemned in Adam before he fell under condemnation himself. But both these propositions are most repugnant to every principle and declaration of the scripture.

4. The elect could not be eternally jus-

tified in Christ their Surety, because the Surety himself was not thus justified. As the God-man, he was made under the law, both in its precept and penalty, nor was he discharged till he had satisfied both to the uttermost. God was first *manifested in the flesh*, then *justified in the Spirit*. This is usually called the *virtual* justification of the elect; by which must be understood, that in the obedience and death of the Lord Jesus a foundation was laid for their pardon and acceptance, so that God might be just in justifying them, and the promise thereof made irreversibly sure to them as the seed. But that this was not their own proper justification is clear from the example of those, who, by faith in the Saviour to come, were justified *before* his appearing to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

5. If the elect were justified from eternity, and of course came justified into the world, it is undeniable that every elect person is regenerated and sanctified from the womb; or else that justification and sanctification may be, and often are, separated: so that a person in favor with God, and an heir of life, may notwithstanding be, for years and scores of years, under the dominion and wallowing in the filth of sin. The former is contrary to notorious fact, and the latter, exploding satisfaction

as the necessary concomitant and test of justification, destroys our Lord's rule, that *the tree is known by its fruit*.

6. The notion of eternal justification overthrows the whole doctrine of the scripture concerning the office of the grace of faith. This is, pre-eminently, to receive Christ Jesus the Lord as Jehovah our righteousness; for *he is made of God unto us, righteousness*; and *with the heart of man believeth unto righteousness*. But if the use of faith be merely to *manifest* our eternal justification, it can in no sense be said to *receive* Christ for righteousness, which implies that previously the person exercising it had none. In addition to which it is obvious, according to this scheme,

(1.) That faith can no otherwise justify than works; because holiness, being the effect of cleansing by the blood of Christ, manifests our justification; yet the scriptures attribute justification to faith, and positively deny it to works.

(2.) That no person can be a believer who has not a comfortable sense of his justification, for faith *manifests* it; and he loses his faith as often as he loses the *manifestation* of his justification; so that there are either no believers in the world, or else men are believers or un-

believers, as their comfortable sense of their justification comes and goes.

(3.) That no sinner can be called by the ministry of the word to believe, or be condemned for unbelief. Not to believe; because the use of faith being to manifest justification, the call if general must be addressed to many who never were and never will be justified and therefore have no justification to be manifested; and if restricted, must be grounded on election; the objects whereof no man knows, or can know. Nor could any be condemned for unbelief; for faith, not being a receiving of Christ for justification, but only manifesting our eternal justification, embraces no offer; and therefore unbelief, which is the reverse of faith, rejects none; and if sinners be condemned for their unbelief, they will be condemned for a non-manifestation of what never existed.

7. The people of God, when enabled at first to believe, never do it as *already justified*; but feeling themselves accurst and perishing sinners, shut up under the most righteous condemnation of the law, flee to the Lord Jesus that they *may be* pardoned, and *may be* saved from the wrath to come. These views are absolutely inconsistent with the idea and the doctrine of eternal justification. To say that

they are erroneous, seeing the elect sinner was eternally justified, though he does not know it, is, on the matter, to say that the Holy Ghost fills his people with groundless terrors, and leads them to lying exercises; for it is he who convinces them of sin by applying to their consciences both the precept and the curse of the law. Nor will it be any relief to plead, that the elect considered as in Christ are justified, but considered in Adam are children of wrath; for this not only silences the challenge of the Apostle, *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?* but supposes them to remain under the very condemnation from which justification in Christ was intended to deliver them. And as, on this plan, there is no inconsistency *now* between their being justified in Christ, and at the same time condemned in Adam, there can be none at any future period: so that the elect may continue to all eternity in the heavens, in the presence and in the enjoyment of God—children of wrath!

From this pernicious tenet, as from a root of bitterness and poison, spring many noxious errors, which at various times have infected the church of Christ, and which a regard to her spiritual health has compelled the synod, however reluctant in severity, to aim at extirpating from their bounds. Hence the infatuated



notions that Christ is offered in the gospel to the elect only—that ministers have nothing to do with the reprobate—that the immediate duty of the hearer of the gospel is to believe, first of all, his personal election to eternal life—that one may be for a series of years in a gracious state without knowing it, or bringing forth the fruits of grace, and yet ought not to question it, with other of a like nature and tendency; all of which do necessarily arise out of the doctrine of eternal justification.

The synod do therefore bear this their explicit and public *testimony* against it; and do solemnly warn and enjoin both ministers and people under their care, as they regard the glory of the Lord Jesus and the welfare of their own souls, to discountenance it and every one, who, in any manner, inculcates it, as subverting the very foundations of the gospel, leading sinners to a false and ruinous confidence, and ministering powerful incentives to all ungodliness.

HINTS ON THE INSUFFICIENCY

OF

THE LIGHT OF NATURE.

# HINTS ON THE INSUFFICIENCY OF THE LIGHT OF NATURE.

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THE light of nature looms largely in all our treatises upon the evidences of religion, forming in most of them a sort of groundwork upon which the fabric of revelation rests; and is esteemed of material importance in consulting the real glory of our nature, and its happiness through all the states of being which lie before it.

Its value is highly overrated, and that which I propose to prove, is, the utter insufficiency of unassisted reason to make those discoveries concerning God, ourselves, our duties, and our destination, which are simply necessary to our happiness, and, therefore, the absolute need of a special communication, on all these particulars, from God himself; which communication we call *Revelation*.

This general position has much hostility to encounter. A great number of men, of whom there is no lack in our own country, deem

what they term *natural religion*, or those deductions which we are able to make, by the force of our *reason* alone, from the works of creation and providence, concerning their Divine Author and our relations to him, and the duties required of us, to be amply sufficient for all the purposes of instruction and blessedness.

These men are distinguished by the name of *Deists*, i. e. who admit the being and government of God, but utterly deny the reality or necessity of a special revelation.

Of these there are, or have been two classes, known by the names of *mortal* and *immortal* Deists; the first bearing a strong resemblance to those philosophists of the French revolution, who pronounced Death to be an *eternal sleep*; the second, more sober and modest, conceding the immortality of the soul and a state of future rewards and punishments. Our debate is chiefly with these, the mortal Deists being rather Atheists than anything else, (and for an Atheist I know of no more suitable argument than a shaven head and a blistering cap—a straight waistcoat and a maniac's cell.)

There is great and confident talk about natural religion even in the Christian world. The advocates of it here, it is true, expressly deny its sufficiency to lead men to eternal

happiness; but they make it to contain a great many fundamental truths, and represent them as the discoveries of mere reason. The effect has been, and must be, the converting of the schools of natural religion and moral philosophy into mere hotbeds of *Deism*; and thus, with the very best intentions, good and upright men have in various parts of the world been undermining the foundations of that divine religion which is taught in the scriptures.

But that we may not do these worthy men injustice, we must remove a mistake into which they have fallen in supposing that the scriptures bear them out in their doctrine of this *natural religion*.

They read in their Bibles that *the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork*. They read that *that which may be known of God is manifest in them* who hold the truth in righteousness, *because God hath showed it unto them: (For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead:)* so  
**THAT THEY ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE.**

That God hath imprinted notices of himself—that he hath, so to speak, written his name upon his works in legible and luminous characters—that he hath made a loud proclama-

tion of "his eternal power and Godhead" in the fabric of heaven and earth, and peculiarly in the structure of that strange compound, the soul and body of man; and therefore that every man living has access to important knowledge of his Maker, even in his own person; and such knowledge as must forever shame his ignorance and forgetfulness; is an indisputable truth. But to infer that all this is the discovery, or can be discovered, by our reason, corrupted and blind as it is, is certainly what the logicians call a *non sequitur*.

You would not say that the non-perception of a mathematical truth affords any presumption that the truth is not perfectly clear *in itself*. You may have met with instances where a person could not tell where even the centre of a circle is to be found, while to us it is perfectly plain; and the hesitation about it only proves the immense stupidity which could have any doubt about the matter. To a young child, that three and two are five may appear a very abstruse proposition; and to us it is as clear as the day.

How many things, moreover, are there in the common works of creation, which cannot be discerned without previous instruction, and are yet altogether obvious to a disciplined observer? The very flowers of the field, the

common grass upon which you habitually tread, disclose beauties and wonders to the eye of a botanist, which are entirely hidden to our own eyes.

What miracles of wisdom, power, design, glory, does the contemplation of the starry heavens unfold ! There, if I may dare so to express myself, is the walk of the Almighty God. There he *clothes himself with light as with a garment*, and every footstep leaves behind him a demonstration that the Creator is there : insomuch, that, to quote the words of the poet,

An undevout astronomer is mad.

Yet the ranks of modern philosophy are full of these madmen. How often have men gazed upon this theatre of glory, where their Maker unveils himself to their notice, without one single thought of his greatness, his grandeur, or even of his being ?

In his written word God has been pleased to make a plain revelation of his perfections and of his grace, so that “ he may run who readeth.” Yet what multitudes are there, to whom the simplest truths of the gospel, the very A B C of religion, are riddles and mysteries insolvable throughout ?

Now, what shall we say to all this ? Is the

fault in the *evidence*, or in the *observer*? In many, if not all of the instances I have mentioned, it will be acknowledged that the evidence is clear enough, but that something is wrong about the faculties which ought to perceive it. This is precisely the solution of the problem of natural religion. The scriptures speak only of the evidence itself which God has given himself and his perfections in his works. From this, worthy men have drawn an inference respecting the powers of human perception. In this inference lies the whole fallacy. Evidence in abundance ; evidence clear as “the sun shineth in its strength”—has he afforded of his “eternal power and Godhead.” There it is, and there it shall remain, in the works of his hands, as long as those works endure. But man, miserable man, blinded and corrupted by his sin, cannot see that evidence ; cannot read the letters of light in which the divine name is inscribed ; cannot hear the proclamation which the voice of God utters throughout the universe. The argument, therefore, from the testimony of the scriptures, must be abandoned ; and the question returns upon us in all its force, can man, unaided by divine revelation, discover by nature’s light what he ought to



know of God and of himself, to lead him in the way of truth and blessedness ?

It is quite obvious that the knowledge which men ought to have of God for this purpose is such as should mingle itself with all the operations of their minds ; such as should extend to all the relations which they bear to him ; such as should be perfectly clear to the feeblest understanding.

1. It is such as should mingle itself with all the operations of their minds. God, I now take for granted, is a Spirit ; that his chief rule is in and over spirit, and, subordinate to this, over the material world. Now, if there be any operations of created mind, which the knowledge of God is not to influence, then to the whole extent of such operations the rational creature would be independent of him, which is neither more nor less than partial Atheism.

2. It should be such as extends to all our relations ; for if it does not, if any be exempted, we cannot give him all the glory which is his due ; and we shall be unable to tell whether the point in which we are deficient is not essential to both our duty and our blessedness.

3. It ought to be perfectly clear to the feeblest understanding. We inquire after that,

which, by the nature of the case, ought to be universal. If, then, there be a single human being, in the ordinary exercise of his powers, who cannot attain it, the whole scheme of natural religion is ruined. It will not do to produce us examples of men of great sagacity, great leisure, and great advantages, as examples of what human reason can do in a case in which every one who breathes the breath of life has an equal interest. *All* are concerned to know ; and if *all* have not either powers or means of knowing, I repeat, the cause of natural religion is ruined.

4. It must not only be clear, but accompanied with indubitable proofs, such proofs as exclude all uncertainty ; for in so momentous a question as that concerning God, our duties, and our destiny, doubt is equivalent to ignorance ; and we may think we are honoring God, and making rapid advances in the way of life, when we are most highly dishonoring him, and going just as rapidly the road to death. There are two, and but two, methods of deciding this controversy. The first is from matters of fact ; the second is *à priori*, from the nature of the human faculties compared with the object which they are to effect.

II. I begin with the first of these, inquiring what man is able to do by examining what he

has done. Our work here is very short. We ask what nation upon earth can be pointed out, who, with all their *notions* of divinity, had clear and satisfactory ideas of the living and true God? What could they tell about his providence? What about the soul of man? Had they ascertained whether it is mortal or immortal? Did they know anything about true holiness? about the chief good? about walking with God? about holding fellowship with him? If they did, let the fact be produced; if they did not, they had no such thing as is called natural religion. But we rest not here. It may be thought that we demand too much when we call for a *nation* possessing this knowledge. Be it so; we are well aware that such a nation cannot be found. But let us waive our demand. I ask, then, when, where, and by whom, were these discoveries made? I do not mean by the vulgar, but by philosophers, who professedly sought after the truth; and some of whom were as close thinkers, as accurate reasoners, as patient and candid investigators, as the world ever saw. Bacon himself did not surpass Aristotle in natural sagacity, in strength of mind, in acuteness, in comprehension. Yet upon the simplest article of natural religion, the very being of a God, there were the most strange varieties of senti-

ment among them. Let *Cicero* save us the trouble of further detail: “*Qui vero*,” says he, in his treatise *De Natura Deorum*, “*Qui vero Deos esse dixerunt, tanta sunt in varietate ac dissentione, ut eorum molestum sit dinumerare sententias.*” (*De Nat. Deor.* page 6, Dav. 1744.) And, indeed, whoever shall be at the trouble of reading the treatise now quoted, will meet with such confusion, conjectures, contradiction—such a chaos of absurdities and nonsense on points of primary importance, as will sicken him to ulterior pursuit, and fill his heart with sadness and sorrow.

Now these were not the whims and guesses of the illiterate among the heathen, but the grave conclusions of their wisest men; and well justifies the declaration of Paul, that *professing themselves to be wise, they became fools*.

It must be granted, however, that occasionally they dropped great expressions when speaking of the Divinity and of virtue. But here we must be on our guard against a very natural and dangerous illusion.

We, who have been brought up and educated in a Christian land, have imbibed all our ideas from the Bible, or those who have read and studied it. Those ideas are so familiar to our minds, and so deeply impressed upon them, that no art nor industry could make us for a

moment, even when children, believe in the truth, for example, of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or in the existence of Homer's gods. Now, when we fall in with noble and lofty expressions of divine things among the Pagan writers, or with the same terms concerning the moral virtues as are in use among ourselves, we insensibly carry our own thoughts with us, and attribute them to the heathen, supposing that they meant the same thing with ourselves, whereas nothing can be farther from the fact. A little explanation, were it possible, would convince us that we had scarcely an idea in common with them.

Such, then, was the state of their theology among their best informed and most virtuous teachers. There was not a man among them, no, not one man, who had any correct or consistent opinions, far less principles, upon those things which concern our most serious duties, our eternal blessedness.

The conclusion is plain. It is absurd to maintain that *every man*, in all ages and circumstances, *can* do, what no man, in any age or circumstances, has actually done. Revelation, therefore, is simply necessary, not for the vulgar, the illiterate mass only, but also for the wise, the cultivated, the most advanced

philosophers, the greatest proficient in human knowledge.

Having seen that the powers of human reason never did, in fact, make the least progress in the discovery of the most necessary truths; that the world by wisdom never knew God; let us now proceed,

II. To inquire, *à priori*, from the nature of the human faculties, what they *can* do in this matter.

It is no doubt very easy for those, who have all their lives breathed the atmosphere of revelation, to demonstrate the being and many glorious excellencies of the First Cause, and to discourse learnedly and convincingly of his providence, of the dependence of all things upon him, upon the duty of worshipping him, the happiness of enjoying his favor, &c., from merely rational principles. All this appears to them quite plain, and whoever shall dispute it to be hardly in the sober exercise of his reason. Well, we have no question but that these truths are perfectly reasonable, as all truth must be in the nature of things. But, how, we may ask, did they come by their means of demonstration? and how has it happened that all these vigorous demonstrators have flourished in Christian lands, and not a single one of them where Christianity is un-

known ? It is the light of divine revelation that has shone upon their darkness, and caused them to see clearly where all was once the blackest midnight ; and they have, with true philosophical gratitude, bedecked their reason with garlands stolen from the tree of life, and given themselves credit for the gift of God. This plagiarism runs manifestly through a Deistical book, formerly of some noise and note, though now nearly forgotten, (as all such books will be sooner or later,) entitled, “ *Christianity as old as the creation.*” Many things are perfectly evident to our understanding when *once they are pointed out*, which, if left to ourselves, would never have come into our minds.

Let us begin with interrogating reason concerning God and his attributes ; though here we must be somewhat at loss ; for really, human reason is so much improved by the light of the gospel, that it is very difficult to distinguish her answers from those of the superior power speaking in her and through her. But if, with all this high advantage, she be caught tripping, we may easily conceive how completely her mouth would be stopped in the deprivation of all supernatural aid.

It is supposed to be one of the simplest and most obvious truths of natural religion, that

there is but one God, the Creator and Governor of all things. If you demand of her advocate how he came by this knowledge, he will reply, that from the unity of design in the works of creation, common sense will of itself infer the unity of their Author. But I am not to be so easily satisfied. I ask farther, how do you *know* this unity of design? Is it not strange that a thing so very obvious should have escaped the notice of the most acute observers for four thousand years? Was there no common sense in the world during all that time? But it must be left for men since the Christian era to perceive this unity? Evident to you it may be; but why was it not evident to Zoroaster, to Thales, to Socrates, to Aristotle, to Plato? They certainly either did not perceive it, or at least did not make this deduction of common sense from it.

Let us, however, consider whether, granting the premises, the inference follows as a matter of course. Does common sense tell me, or any one else, that *several* deities may not with perfect harmony *concur* in one and the same design, and keep up the execution of that design? If they could, where is your proof from the unity of design? and how are you to prove that they could not? If you draw your proof from the disagreement which must



necessarily take place among men, you then judge of the divinities by yourselves, making yourselves the standard of their actions, and making them no more gods than you are. This looks much more like the theology of Homer, who, Longinus being judge, has represented his gods like men, and his men like gods. The alternative is manifestly this: twenty gods may agree in producing the harmony of the universe; or should they disagree, that disagreement would prove that there are no gods, which contradicts the very terms of the argument, and is a begging of the question. My argument is a very plain one. Twenty true gods might agree perfectly, and you answer this by showing that they could not be gods at all! Well, then, your reason even now, with all that revelation has done for it, fails most lamentably in the proof that there is only one living and true God. In fact the doctrine of the ancient Persians, and later of the Manichees, that there are *two* principles, one good and the other evil, appears to be more consonant to depraved reason than the doctrine of the divine unity.

In the same manner it may be shown, that mere reason will not bear you out in the position that the one God is necessarily the Eternal, Immutable, Omnipresent, Omniscient.

When you come to the consideration of his *goodness*, your difficulties increase. He does, indeed, pour his bounty upon the earth ; but he also pours out his curse. A fruitful season is balanced by one of sterility. If you have one year abundance of food, you have a famine in another. If the heavens are now serene and pleasing, they are again charged with thunder and lightning, pregnant with hail-storm and tempest. To-day the genial shower descends ; to-morrow a flood sweeps off together the fruits of human industry and of the earth's fertility, and carries away both man and beast in its impetuous torrent. At one time the atmosphere is benign and exhilarating ; at another, charged with the pestilence, it causes us to inhale our death with the very instrument of life. Nature's light furnishes not the key to these apparent contradictions, nor enables us to conceive how a Being of boundless goodness, can inflict so much suffering. *Conjectures, probable conjectures*, we may have, but none can say that his conjectures are *demonstrated* ; and therefore none can show a solid foundation on which the mind can rest.

This deep and dreadful fluctuation of opinion, arising from the variations we perceive in the government of the world, shakes all our ideas at the same time of the divine *immuta-*

bility ; and a *changeling* God is a most fearful thought.

Should ever the query arise in our minds, and it has often arisen in the minds of many, *what is the mode of subsistence in the divine nature ?* we stand at once aghast. “It is high as heaven, what can we know ? Deeper than hell, what can we do ?” Who among the children of men is not subdued, confounded, annihilated, by the majesty of the theme, by his own daring presumption ? Here we stand, young and old, learned and unlearned, wise and foolish, alike petrified by our own intrusion “into those things which we have not seen.” And who would ever have dreamed of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in that one God, had he not been pleased to reveal the fact by that Spirit who searcheth “the deep things of God ?” Yet if the true knowledge of the true God be essential in all circumstances to our duty and our happiness, the doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity must be a branch, and a material branch, of natural religion.

*That the soul of man is immortal*, has been argued from its immateriality—from its capacities—from its desires—and from the course of providence—all of which, when weighed in the balance, will be found wanting. None

upon which, in the hour of your utmost need, you could with confidence stake your eternity.

1. It has been argued that because the soul is immaterial, it must necessarily be immortal; because from its immateriality, it has no principle of dissolution. Now death is a dissolution, and that which cannot be dissolved, cannot die.

Granting that all this, except the conclusion, is correctly spoken; that there is no sophistry in the argument, no play upon the terms; how does the conclusion follow? Life and death depend upon the sovereign pleasure of God. Now where has he told you that he will never command an immaterial being back again into its original nothing? When did he deprive himself of his power to annihilate any of his creatures, and to create others in their stead? It will not do to say, that whatever be his power, it is not his purpose. How do you know that? Search the earth and the heavens till you find a proof of it. For aught that appears from nature's light, God may have many wise reasons to deprive even immaterial beings of existence. They come into the world by his almighty fiat. They there answer a temporary purpose, and then are ordered out of it. What have you to say, why it should not be so? You may not pretend

that it contradicts all your ideas of the divine goodness and wisdom. But how are you sure that your ideas are right? In many other things they are manifestly wrong. A short proof is, that your goodness and wisdom would do everything in the government of the universe different from what he does. And suppose it be the same case here. You cannot show that it is not. Therefore, for aught you can tell, the soul's immateriality is no bar to its annihilation.

2. When we draw an inference from the *capacities* of the soul to its immortality, we talk at random. Those capacities are, indeed, in our view, stupendous. We can form no conception of the improvement and powers which the most unpromising of human beings may in due season develop. But what are these to the Infinite One? He could, with perfect ease, vacate all their stations in the scale of being, and instantly replace them with creatures far nobler, and of still greater capacities. The world, for aught we can tell, would be no loser by the exchange, and his glory might be a great gainer. What has your reason to say to the contrary? You may guess, you may conjecture : but guessing and conjecturing afford a very miserable foothold when you are about stepping into a state of

untried being. And I will venture to say, that no man ever yet enjoyed any solid comfort, from the mere consciousness of a capacity fitted for lasting good. He must be equally conscious of a capacity of lasting wo. And the idea of miserable existence cannot be comfortable.

Besides, men's capacities are not fully employed here. Genius of the highest order often languishes, is smothered, does not display the thousandth part of its riches, dies unknown, disappears, and is forgotten. How do you know but something of the same kind may occur hereafter? Many, multitudes of things, in the animal and material creation, have valuable properties, which, nevertheless, are not unfolded. And I presume your reason is not of so morbid a quality as to persuade you of the immortal life of horses, of trees, and cabbages. Millions of creatures perish, without even evolving the germ of such faculties as they possess. How can we determine what exhibitions of wisdom the Creator may please to make by this use of his creatures? We never were of his counsel, and where we know nothing, we must not decide: our best course is to "lay our hands on our mouths, and our mouths in the dust," and to ask no impertinent nor curious questions.

3. But we have large desires; vehement longings; and intense appetite for immortality. Why were these desires given? this longing-excited? this appetite implanted? Only to be disappointed? To teach us to expect mighty things, and vanish like a dream? Verily, this looks like charging our Maker with a deliberate mockery.

Not so hasty, if you please. Are there not in other things, much desire, ardent longing, intense appetite, which, however, are in fact disappointed? Is your Maker obliged to gratify your wishes, however unreasonable or extravagant, under the penalty of being accused of mockery if he does not. Suppose one man has a passion for being a king; another for an endless succession of pleasures; a third for more wealth than is to be found in both the Indies. Is your Maker under any possible necessity of satisfying this desire, this longing, this appetite. And must we, wretched beings of a day, presume to impeach his wisdom or goodness, if he refuse?

It will not be denied that we are sinful creatures. What if all this desire after immortality should proceed from a sinful bias of our nature? What if it should be nothing but a longing, inherited from our first mother, who, as the scripture informs us, wished very much

to be like God ? What if it should meet with his rebuke instead of his indulgence ? What if it should, after all, be nothing more than that love of life which all beings have, and strong in proportion to their perception of its sweetness ? Is this really a ground upon which you rest your hope ?

But why did not all these satisfy inquirers of old ? Men had as large capacities, as insatiable desires and longings, then, as they have now. Yet Plato, even Plato, the prince of philosophers, put his argument for futurity, I do not say immortality, upon a childish analogy. Day succeeds night ; and night day. Therefore, as death succeeds life, so life must succeed death. And to make this sophism appear the worse, he has put it into the mouth of the grave, acute, sententious Socrates. Plainly showing that even that wonderful man had nothing better to offer.

If we have recourse to a moral plea from the inequalities of God's government here, vice often triumphant, virtue depressed, it would seem that his justice requires an hereafter : and so it has been, and is yet, very confidently alleged, that if God be just, he must in a future state show that righteous impartiality which we do not observe to obtain here.

The utmost that can be concluded from this



argument, even if we were to grant its assumptions, is that there shall be a *future* state ; but how it proves that an *immortal* one, I am unable to see. For of all arguments it appears to be the weakest among the weak. A single remark will be enough to refute it. Who among the children of men will undertake to affirm that the Most High God cannot rectify in a given time all the inequalities which have taken place in a given time ? That he requires an eternity to set right what ever has gone wrong in this temporary existence ? Immortality, then, the unequal dispensations of Divine Providence here cannot prove. I will go farther, and perhaps deny that they prove even a *future* state. The plea which we are now considering takes for granted, that there is great inequality in the divine administration. How do you *know* that ? Who erected you into judges, and especially *competent* judges ? “ You see vice prospering,” you say, “ virtue depressed and despised.” But can you tell what passes within the bosoms of men ? We know from matter of fact, that vicious men, though surrounded with wealth, and honors, and flatterers, are sometimes very miserable. They confess it, in spite of their flatterers. Memorable is the acknowledgment of

Col. Gardiner, before he was brought to the knowledge, or had tasted the love of God. He was handsome, gay, gallant, accomplished, versed in every form of elegant dissipation, and on all sides, complimented and flattered. Here is an example of prosperous vice: but he owned afterwards, that in the very moments of gayety, in the very riots of joy, when all the sons and daughters of mirth and pleasure were paying him homage, he has often said to himself, when a dog accidentally came into the room, “O that *I were that dog!*” On the contrary, a virtuous man in affliction has often consolations which he would not exchange for the prosperity of vice. If it should be otherwise, remember that we are poor judges. The all-penetrating eye of God, may detect some flaw in his virtue for which he deserves to be punished. Suppose, now, that the secret dealings of God with virtuous and vicious individuals, should completely and exactly balance the difference of their outward lot—and that they do not is more than nature’s light can demonstrate—where is your argument for a future state. The accounts of men are finally settled, and there is no room for another state in order to adjust them. I say, then, that mere unaided reason, when, she so confidently

vaunts her ability to show the certainty of a future and an immortal state, and comes to grapple with the proof and the difficulties, finds her strength to fail her, and she faints and falls in the struggle.

I readily allow that all these things, our capacities, our wishes, and our natural feelings, of which no human being can entirely divest himself, and which render our nature an everlasting puzzle to our understandings, most admirably coincide with the doctrine of our immortality, when once made known and certain from divine revelation, while without it they afford nothing satisfying, but leave the mind a prey to anxiety, immerse it in doubt, and all the distractions inseparable from suspense. Such, then, is the miserable estate of a man destitute of the benefit of God's revelation. He hopes, and he knows not why: he fears, and he knows not what. His conscience fills him with awful forebodings which he can neither explain nor avoid: all around him is intellectual and moral chaos. It may be he shall live hereafter: it may be God shall call him to account: it may be there is happiness and glory in a world to come: but it may be also, a world of woe. The forms which pass and repass before his mental vision, are forms of undefined horror. He has light enough to

let him see that he is inexcusable ; but not near enough to discover the cause of his perplexity ; not enough to see that he is ruined ; and far, far too little to espy his relief. Despair broods over the scene ; and nothing will ever dissipate the gloom, but the “ light of the knowledge of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ.”

On the supposition that there is a happy hereafter, a most serious question and a most tremendous difficulty instantly occur. The question is, “How shall we attain it?” If you answer “by doing the will of God,” the difficulty immediately faces you, “How do you *know the will* of God?” Hic labor, hoc opus. What can our unassisted reason discover of that will? The sum and the substance of all she can say, Mr. Addison has put into the mouth of Cato, at the very time when he was meditating and about to perpetrate suicide.

If there be a power above, (and that there is  
All nature cries aloud through all her works,)  
He must delight in virtue : and that which he delights in  
Must be happy.

Very poetically spoken : but poetry will not quiet a troubled conscience. The difficulty still remains. It is a hideous spectre, which all the art of poetical necromancy cannot charm down. What is *virtue*? Is it con-

formity to the divine will? But then, again, How am I to *ascertain* the divine will? Till this point be settled, I am at as great a loss as ever. “You must search it out in his works,” replies the advocate of nature’s power. “Where?” I impatiently ask, “Where? Is it in these heavens? Is it in yonder deep? Does it shine in the splangled firmament, or is it spread on the face of the earth? Is it written upon the leaves of the tree, on the flowerets of the field, or to be heard in the howl of the beasts of the forest? Show it, O show it to me!

You will tell me that it can be deduced as a very plain inference from the works which we behold. That from the marks of skill and design, everywhere visible in creation, we very naturally infer, the goodness, the truth, the kindness of their author. I answer, that this is not satisfactory to my mind; that the conclusion is by much too far from the premises; that there is no natural nor necessary proportion between intellectual and moral attributes, nor any inference that can at all be drawn from his *works* to his *will*. That I indeed see, in common with millions more, abundant traces of wisdom and power, but what does all this teach me of the divine *will*? It is true, that from the conformation of cer-

tain creatures, I can certainly infer his pleasure in some particulars: for example, from the structure of our teeth, and the cravings of our stomach, I may conclude, without hesitation, that my Maker intended I should eat: and so of many other physical things. But this has no sort of connection with my moral duties. It does not inform me how I am to worship him, nor what course I am to pursue towards my fellow-creatures. I might eat to the full, and never think of him; nor feel myself impelled to one act of kindness to my fellow-man.

When we see a clock performing its complicated movement with precision, we can and do pronounce, immediately, upon the *skill* of the clockmaker; but who ever thought of looking at a *clock* to determine the moral character of the man? So in the machinery of the world. It is self-evident that it could not be constructed but by a being superlatively wise and skillful. But it warrants no further conclusion.

The great question, what does God require of me to secure his favor, and my own blessedness, is hidden in impenetrable darkness, notwithstanding the clear proofs of his skill and wisdom in the creation. Nor can I derive any, the most remote consolation, from his

being possessed of boundless skill and power. Who shall inform me, with *certainty*, that his infinite resources shall not be put in requisition to make me miserable? Or who shall quiet the misgivings of my conscience on this head? That there *are* such misgivings, and very vehement ones, is a fact for which I have as many vouchers as there are men in the world. But the *origin* of these misgivings is the point, as well as all the other aberrations of the human mind. That these are very often sinful, that they give to our thoughts and purposes a criminal bias, and are the source of criminal actions, who can deny, or who explain?

Here, then, a new difficulty occurs. How shall we account for the introduction of moral evil, I do not say into the universe, but into our world? If we know nothing of its original, we must be ignorant of its cure.

Shall we say that our Creator *made* us so? That it was intermixed with the elements of our constitution *ab initio*? How, then, shall we excuse our Maker from being the Author of evil? How reconcile it with his *justice* to punish man for the very things which he laid him under a necessity of committing? And of what use would a pure law of obedience be,

suppose we had it, if by our very nature we cannot help transgressing it?

Is it an adventitious affection of our being? How came it? Does it excuse us from the charge of offending God? Who will demonstrate this? On all these points, momentous as they are, we are utterly in the dark. The darkness thickens upon us the moment we proceed a step farther and ask about our deliverance.

Will the Most High God pardon sin? O yes! say the advocates of nature's light, *he is very merciful*. It may be so, but where is your proof? Is it in the pain, sickness, sorrow, and death, of which the world is full? Is it in the sad solicitude of men's minds whenever they seriously ask such a question? Can you show by facts that God in his dealings with men actually forgives sin? Can you point me out one sinner whom he has thus forgiven? Methinks, if it were so plain, so much a matter of course, there could be no want of those happy individuals to whom he has been gracious. I wish to see the man who can say, upon other than scriptural grounds, that *his iniquities are taken away, and his sin purged*. One fact is worth a million speculations. If I can see a man walking in the peace of his conscience, and under a sense of forgiving love, I have



done. We can show thousands of such men, upon the Christian plan, who can give a rational account how they came by their peace, and why they believe, that, although sinners, God has most graciously forgiven their sins. But if I shut up the Bible, I shut up your hearts in midnight darkness, in ill-boding anticipations.

The idea of *repentance* for your sins will perhaps afford you relief. Man is frail, you think. God is most gracious, and what more can he ask of a poor offender than all he has, which is to be sorry for his offence and to labor after amendment ?

The first question to be resolved here, is, what you understand by *repentance*. Is it merely sorrow for the *consequences* of sin ? Men deprecate punishment, no doubt. No criminal can be in love with the gallows. But let him once free—let him escape the halter and he will be as active as ever in the repetition of his crime. Is it *this* repentance with which you would put off your Maker ? To tell him, in substance, that you are very sorry that he has detected you in your rebellion ? very sorry that he is stronger than you, and that you cannot escape—that you are alike unable to resist and to flee ? and, therefore, that he must of course pardon you, or else lose all credit for

generosity with you and with rebels like you ? Why not make yet shorter work of it, and tell him that it is absurd to punish sin at all ? and that if he does not issue an act of general indemnity, he will forfeit your good opinion forever afterwards ? This is really the amount of the plea for pardon merely on account of your sorrow for sin.

Oh, but, say you, you connect with your repentance the purpose and promise of amendment. Well, and if you do, and if you even execute your purpose and fulfill your promise, what has that to do with the question. It is for your *past* transgressions that you are to be punished, and you purpose and promise to obey in *future* ! Do you mean to *pay* your Creator ? and to pay him with what is already his due ? Or do you imagine you can save anything over and above the demands of his law, and lay up a fund of merit out of which you may satisfy its claims on account of former transgressions ? In moral matters this is the very rectified spirit of absurdity.

I would inquire, moreover, if there is any such thing as a penalty to God's law ? The very notion of *pardon* seems to imply it ; and it is argued that repentance is to procure the remission of the penalty, which remission is another word for pardon. Well, then, is this

penalty a mere bugbear? a painted scourge, which is never to be used? If it is, then what becomes of the authority of the law, or the awful majesty of the divine government—if men do what they please, have nothing to fear from God the Avenger? Oh, no! will it be said, it will be strictly executed upon impenitent offenders, while to the penitent mercy will be extended. That is to say, that God makes, through means of nature, a proclamation of pardon to all rebels who are willing to be pardoned! For this wish to be pardoned lies at the bottom of all repentance. Is not this, now, a pretty government? a model of impotence or indolence, which would be overwhelmed with ridicule in the affairs of men? And shall we dare to attribute to the “only wise God” a constitution which would be laughed at for its folly, if it were attempted among men? Of all the dreams which have at various times filled their heads on the subject of government, there is none half so crazy, so bereft of common sense, as this; and such a stupid constitution men would palm upon their Maker!

Let me ask yet again, Can the Most High God justly punish a repenting sinner in *any* case? Or must all crimes whatever be forgiven, provided the criminal repents? If not,

if he may punish notwithstanding repentance, then you cannot be sure of pardon, repent never so much. But if pardon must necessarily ensue upon repentance, I ask farther, can the sinner repent when he pleases, or must his repentance be the gift of God? If the former, if his repentance be purely an act of his own will, I see not but there is a necessary abolition of all the sanction of God's law; or which comes to the same thing, a sinner can evade it whenever he pleases, for he can repent whenever he pleases, and when he repents he is pardoned, i. e. he can escape punishment whenever he pleases. But if repentance be a gift of God, he must depend upon the will of another for his pardon; and as the acts of that will cannot be compelled, he must owe his forgiveness to the good pleasure of God. Now, whether he will ever interfere thus or not in behalf of man, he only can tell; and if he tells it, that is revelation. Say not he tells it in his works of creation and providence. I once more ask, *where*? In the leaves of the trees? In the feathers of the birds? In the stones of the ground? In the streams of water? It is really trifling with our most awful concerns to pretend to find it here.

But still there are strong indications of God's forgiveness in the course of his providence—

that his *long forbearance* bespeaks his graciousness and encourages hopes of pardon. His forbearance does indeed mark his graciousness, and woe to them whom it never leads to repentance ! But it extends equally to the penitent and to the impenitent. If the penitent only were objects of the divine forbearance, something like an argument might be founded upon it. But what if this forbearance be only until sinners have filled up the measure of their iniquities ? Will punishment be the lighter because it has been long delayed ? Shutting a man up in prison, and sparing his forfeited life until the day of execution comes, does not make execution at last either less certain or more tolerable.

After all, is it true that we can fairly argue any purpose of forgiveness from the acts of Divine Providence ? I mean, do these demonstrate the connection between forgiveness of sin and the repentance of the sinner ?

In human governments, where we find men's most sober judgment, it is evident they do not ; and in the view of the most wise and compassionate of the community, they ought not.

When men are convicted of crime, they very often show great sorrow for their fault ;

but what should we think of the judge who should liberate a prisoner upon this plea? Nay, the sentence of the law must be heard, must take its course in the infliction of punishment, even to the loss of life itself. And do we not see in the government of God, as administered in his providence, innumerable instances when the penalty annexed to transgression actually follows the offence, be the offender never so contrite?

A man impoverishes himself by his extravagance, and ruins his family besides. He wastes his health and becomes a prey to lingering and loathsome disorders by his dissipation. He may become extremely sorry for his excesses, but does that for one moment arrest the penalty? Does his penitence drive poverty from his door, or restore his family to comfort? Does penitence heal his diseases, and sweeten his body? Penitent, truly penitent, he may be; ay, and his sins may be forgiven, too, for the world to come, and the fruits of them may be death without mercy here.

Whether, then, we consult the nature of the case, or hearken to the voice of God speaking in the acts of his government, the only conclusion to be drawn from both, is, that re-

penitance does not procure forgiveness ; so that for anything nature's light or the light of reason can show us, the hope of a sinner is as the giving up of the ghost.